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March 1950 1/-

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March, 1950 Vol. 1. No. 3.

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Assistant Editor:* DAVID RAHER

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MERSEY HOUSE, 132-4, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

WE are grateful for the comments and criticisms of our first number, they were very helpful if only to confirm our realisation of our own shortcomings. Specially fond are we of the lady who gave one glance and said, "What a vulgar paper, how can Caryl Brahms write in it," and the other who on looking at the cover exclaimed, "Of course the paper has nothing to do with ballet at all, there are those dreadful Ugly Sisters." Another lady, connected with education, stated that it was "too popular and too technical." A very famous dancer stated that the picture of Babilée was quite unsuitable for a ballet paper and should be on the cover of Health and Strength. Other dancers who have never shown much enthusiasm for either ourselves or ballet papers as a whole, suddenly became very friendly; presumably in the hope that they might become "dancers you should know." Others became very frigid because it was obvious we knew too much. But most encouraging of all was the number of people unknown to us personally, who took the, trouble to write, come up to us in theatres, restaurants, or in the street, to say how much they liked it and that they looked forward to the next number. We hope that you will continue to criticise — we shall listen to all that you have to say.

★

"Strange, how a day can suddenly change," sang the one and only Fred Astaire in the film *Carefree*. Last month we were full of dire forebodings about the future of dancers in this country. Now, as many companies close down, so others, like dragon's teeth, are starting up all over the place—ballet in Hammersmith, ballet in Bayswater, several touring companies—to mention only a few. Perhaps these are the first deceptive murmurs of spring, perhaps they are but idle pipe-dreams; it all looks as though the ballet-world is determined not to let celluloid be its eternal bed-fellow.

We hope that these brave and ambitious people know what they are doing. We sincerely hope that before they commit more dancers to soul-destroying tours and heart-breaking weeks of salary cuts they know just how much they should have in the "kitty." We hope they are not misguidedly cashing-in on Sir Stafford Cripps' statement that ballet has become a dollar earner. We hope that these stirrings are prompted by a natural desire to create something and not by the lust for easy shekels. (The only people who ever make money out of ballet are those who never put any into it—a mere handful of dancers and choreographers at that). So if you, Mr. Promoter, think you are going to sit back and watch the money rolling in while dancers twirl and sweat, then please give the whole thing another thought before it is too late. Orchestras, dancers, scenery, and costumes cost money and shoes too are a heavy item—and that is only where you start. It takes the greatest artistry in the world to run a company on a shoestring; Rambert managed it in the early days but we were not so sophisticated then. French companies have done it since but they turned poverty into sophistication. So if you are prepared for any eventuality, anxious to help dancers, encourage new composers, and discover new designers—then you will earn the respect and gratitude of everyone outside the iron curtain of Nationalised ballet.

★

Everything that keeps dancers out of the clutches of the Labour Exchange is a step in the right direction. The reports from those who have attempted to taste the meagre fruits that reluctantly fall from these uninviting cornucopias of austerity, are distressing. "Dancers" they are told "are a pain in the neck to the Ministry of Labour". Another line of attack is to try and make them say they will give up dancing and take up work of "national importance". We all know that means working in a factory—certain death to the dancer and probably to our export drive. Personally we feel that dancers are doing more to help us retain our sanity in this unattractive age than many of the highly paid organisers of our time and leisure. No dancer wants to be out of work, only misfortune places them in this position; weeks of unemployment are more disastrous than in almost any other profession. If these weeks of enforced idleness are to be made more hideous by bureaucratic asperity then it is a sad reflection on the State's approach to artists.

P.W.

Cover Story

Howard Byrne's cover photograph shows Tamara Toumanova and George Skibine in the popular *pas de deux* from Petipa's four act *Don Quixote*, with Minkus music. Although the ballet is still given in Russia, it is only this fragment that England knows. It was in this, that the two dancers scored such a success during the 1949 season of the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo at Covent Garden, and also later in the same year at the Nijinsky Galas at the Empress Hall.

TOUMANOVA was born while her parents were fleeing from the revolution. She was aged seven when she first went to the famous teacher, Preobrajenska, in Paris. After starting at the Paris Opera she came to England to appear with Les Ballets 1933, later in that year became one of the three "baby ballerinas" with Baronova and Riabouchinska, in the De Basil company. Now that Baronova has retired, Toumanova remains the greatest of the three. After appearing in other companies and Broadway musicals, she went to Hollywood in 1943 to make films, there she married her director—Casey Robinson. After the war came to Europe to appear again at the Paris Opera as guest artist. In 1949 she joined the de Cuevas Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo, where she remained for a year. This spring she again returns to the Paris Opera from where she started. It is probably this lack of permanent background that causes her to give uneven performances. On her "playing to the gallery" nights she can be truly embarrassing, but on her good nights she is breathtaking.

SKIBINE is rapidly becoming one of the foremost male dancers in the world. Born near Kharkhov in 1920, he was educated in France. He, too, was a pupil of Preobrajenska; his other teachers including Lifar and Vilzak. Starting with his father, who was a dancer in the Diaghiev company, he joined the Blum Ballet de Monte Carlo in 1938. During the war he was in America with the De Basil company in 1940, and Ballet Theatre in 1941. He joined the U.S. army in 1942 and on leaving it in 1945, he went into Massine's Ballet Highlights. In 1946 he toured with the Markova-Dolin company, and in 1947 joined the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo, where he has remained ever since. Each year he improves and his personality and humility (a quality, very rare) make him a pleasure to watch at all times.

Contributors

CARYL BRAHMS, the famous novelist and ballet critic, has judged the competition she set in our January number and written her comments on the entries.

EVAN SENIOR is an Australian music and ballet critic now working in London. This month he contributes an article on Tchaikovsky's Ballet Music.

TATLOCK MILLER is also an Australian critic. This month he writes on the young choreographer, John Cranko, and his work. He also contributes a profile of Marie Rambert, who he got to know well, when her company toured Australia.

ARTHUR TODD writes for many American papers on the dance, particularly on the Modern Dance. In the present issue he introduces personalities of this group, about whom too little is known in England.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS include Alain Vigot from France, Herbert Ross from America, and Bent Schonberg from Scandinavia.

BRITAIN DANCES

A colourful spectacle is created by folk dancers from all over Britain doing the Cumberland Square Dance *at the Royal Albert Hall*
(Photo : Sport and General)

ON January 6 and 7 at the Royal Albert Hall the English Folk Dance and Song Society presented a spectacle of folk dancing that rivalled the Nijinsky Galas at Empress Hall for sheer theatricality. The Albert Hall, infinitely more suitable for folk dancing than was the Empress Hall for ballet presentation, enhanced the atmosphere of informality imparted by the dancers, making it difficult for the onlooker to restrain an impulse to join in.

The programme began impressively with a dance to a version of the *Cherry Tree Carol* sung by Patrick Shuldham-Shaw, introducing the mass of folk dancers representing thirty-nine districts of Great Britain. Also included were examples of the traditional Sword Dance (*Yorkshire Sword Dance*, *Northumberland Sword Dance*), *the Morris Dance* (*The Maid of the Mill* (Bampton, Oxon), *Jackie to the Fair*, *Leap Frog*), to the accompaniment of Pipe and Tabor played by Kenworthy Shofield and the concertina played by Kenneth Loveless; and Country Dances (*Jenny Pluck Pears* (1650), *Newcastle* (1650), *Princess Margaret's Fancy* (1949)), with fiddle music by Elsie Avril and William Ganiford.

Among the Scottish dances provided by the Edinburgh Branch of the Scottish Country Dance Society was the best performance of the evening given by handsome Iain Robertson whose Hebridian Lilt and execution of the Scottish Solo Dance, Sean Truibhs, put him in a class by himself. The Scotsmen also danced *Montgomerie's Rant; Ladies' Fancy; Glasgow Highlanders; Madge Wildfire; Deil Amang the Tailors* and the *Gates of Edinburgh*.

Northern Ireland was represented by the Patricia Mulholland team contributing some intricate footwork in a clog-dance which is the forerunner of modern tap dancing. Many hours of practice must have gone into the achievement of such excellent co-ordination.

From Denmark came this year's foreign guests. In traditional costume and closely resembling Peter Breughels, "Wedding Feast," pipes and all, they provided an interlude of merriment and abandon in sharp contrast to the restraint of the English team. Some of the 11 numbers danced by the Danes were the *Hornpipe from Randersegnen*, "*The pig fell and broke his hip*," *The Shoemaker's Schottisch*, *Contra-Dance with Minuet* and *Sonderhoning—Fisherman's Dance*.

The highlight of the programme was the *Abbots Bromley Horn Dance*, made more effective by clever lighting. The weird, eerie quality of these Pagan dancers whose invocations to the God of Fertility bordered on magic, was conveyed by the wearing of black and white antler horns and weaving in and out in a slow serpentine processional around the hall to fiddle music, at regular intervals sprinkled with tiny vibrating tones from triangles. All in semi-darkness, the dance was relieved occasionally by the play of red, green and white spot lights which gave the impression of reflections of a huge bonfire.

The Festival closed with a high spirited Square Dance, *The Wearing o' the Green*, which brought together Danes, English, Irish and Scots.

Practically an extinct art, folk dancing in England was rescued from complete oblivion by the late Cecil Sharp, folk song collector and founder of the English Folk Dancing and Song Society, who devoted his life to the reconstruction and dissemination of these ancient dances.

Originally a collector of folk music, his interest in folk dancing was stimulated by seeing a group of Morris Dancers perform in Headington, Oxford, in 1899. Several years later he resolved to revive this gradually disappearing art by a systematic recording of existing dances and their music. He pressed into service William Kimber, the musician for Headington's Morris Dancers, from whom poured a wealth of information, precipitating a series of volumes by Sharp on Morris Dances, Sword Dances and Country Dances that easily qualified him as the leading authority on Folk Dancing in England.

The 18 years from 1906 until his death in 1924 were confined to teaching, lecturing and the collection of new material. Dogged by a need for carefully trained teachers and a place to experiment with his newly discovered dances he drew from a physical training college a unit of demonstrators, men and women, whom he used to illustrate his lectures.

Encouraged by his results and with the Folk Dance Club as the nucleus, he founded the English Folk Dance Society in 1911. Shortly afterwards centres were established throughout the English provinces and Stratford-upon-Avon was designated as the locale for Holiday Courses. Sharp personally visited and demonstrated in the main provincial branches and by 1914 had acquired a considerable number of adherents.

Upon his return from America in 1918, where he had acquired a number of new folk-songs in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, Sharp, encouraged by the Board of Education, began an intensive programme of teaching folk songs and dances in schools and colleges.

Today, twenty-six years after his death, the organisation he founded in 1911 is firmly established and continues to grow. Operating from a partially bombed structure in Regent's Park Road, the directors are hoping to rebuild the demolished section of Cecil Sharp House with funds donated to the Cecil Sharp House Reconstruction Fund.

Folk dances may possibly be put into three basic categories: Morris Dances, Sword Dances and Country Dances. A typical example of the first mentioned category is the Derbyshire Morris, which hails from Winster and consists of eight pairs of dancers each of which is differently dressed to form a contrast of plain and coloured sides. In the cortege is a King, a Queen, a black-faced Witch and a Fool. The King leads the procession through the streets, stopping occasionally to do a stationary dance, *i.e.* a Reel.

There are two types of Sword Dances, depending upon the kind of sword used. The Yorkshire sword is one-handled and inflexible, while the Northumberland and Durham is double-handled, shorter and easily flexed. Linked together in the form of a ring or chain English Sword Dancers perform their patterns in close formation. These intricate patterns often resemble a Balanchine enchainement. Accompanying the Sword Dancers are a number of characters, as in the Morris Dances, who indicate the nature of the custom being celebrated. Usually a Mid-winter fête, taking place on Boxing Day or Plough Sunday, it represents a battle of Life and Death.

Country Dances, which are primarily figure dances, consist of such basic steps as "skipping" and "sliding steps" forming recurrent figures known as "setting", "sliding", "arming" "turn single" and "hey". It differs from the social folk dancing of other nations by the marked absence of the polka, waltz or schottische, the participants in shoulder-waist or social dance positions.

These dances are usually performed in square, circular or longways formations, the number of couples used depending upon the specific figure called for. Colourful titles such as *The Maid Peeped Out at the Window*, *The Bonny, Bonny Broom*, *Mage on a Cree* and *Sweet Kate* are used. **D.R.**

Top left: the lock *or* interlacing *is the climax of the "Rapper" Sword Dance usually danced in Durham and Northumberland*

(*Photo : John Gay*)

Top right: Royal Earsdon Sword dancers (coal miners) who once danced for Edward VII were one of the many districts represented at the Folk Dance Festival at the Albert Hall

(*Photo : Fisher Cassie*)

Members of the National Demonstration Team of the English Folk Dance and Song Society doing the Leap Frog Morris Dance *at Stratford-on-Avon*

(*Photo : Sport and General*)

White Hope of the Wells

John Cranko, at twenty-three, is the most promising of all the young English choreographers. His work has shown a firm, certain and consistent development and shortly, when he becomes resident choreographer to the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet Company, he will hold a position unique in the whole world of ballet for the opportunity which it offers so young a man. Coloured brightly with promise, the pattern of his choreographic career is now firmly drawn and his future bright indeed.

IT seems that John Cranko has always known what he wanted to do, almost since that first South African day in August, 1927, when he was born at Rustenburg, north of Johannesburg, in the centre of an orange growing district, hot, like Italy, scented with blossom. At eleven he ran away from school, St. John's College, to join a ballet company in Cape Town. He was expelled, but had seen his first ballet, made great decisions for his own future life.

Sent to another school, he built himself a puppet theatre, conceived and used his own characters, devised sceneries, went puppeteering, gave performances of Hans Andersen's *Pee-Wee and the Nutcracker* to the *Casse-Noisette* music, as well as many divertissement and acrobatic dances. The puppeteer pulled the strings, created his miniature magic world, brought the figures to life which a little later was to be paralleled by the choreographer of ballet directing, instigating, producing the flow of movement, of ideas, making the ever-changing patterns of dancers dancing. "This little model theatre showed me much about the placing of characters on a stage and the patterns that they make," he told me.

When he was 15 his family let him leave school and at last he was able to go to Cape Town and join the University Ballet School, directed by Dulcie Howes. Here he got his first schooling and background. "I at last knew that feeling of belonging to ballet," he says. He was only 16 when he made his first piece of juvenilia, a ballet, believe it or not, made to Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*. The precocious choreographer wrote the book which told of a Devil who lost a magic violin which was found by a rather scruffy little soldier and how the Devil tried to get it back by all sorts of ramifications, including a Scarlet Woman. A cast of eleven was headed by David Poole as the Soldier and by Pamela Crimes as the Scarlet Woman. Pamela Crimes, after dancing with the Sadler's Wells second company, is now directing the Cape Town University Ballet Company.

The following year the University Ballet commissioned him to do two new ballets, *Primavera*, to Debussy, the second to the Holberg Suite of Greig. It was in the former that he first began to realise himself as a choreographer. Again commissioned, he produced his now well-known *Tritsch-Tratsch*, at the end of 1946. This is now, of course, in the permanent repertoire of the second company at the Wells.

Cranko now wanted the experience and wider balletic horizon which England could give him. Ships from South Africa were booked out months in advance but eventually, out of the blue, Thomas Cooks' telephoned: "Can you sail at midday tomorrow?" He did. It was January, 1946. He found a room in Cheyne Walk, unpacked and the first morning went to Sadler's Wells, talked with the company's Ballet Mistress and Producer, Peggy van Praagh, went to a class and was accepted for the Sadler's Wells School. "That very first morning I told Peggy van Praagh that I wanted to be a choreographer. Everyone had always told me that that was pretty well impossible and full of awful difficulties. I knew, but was quite determined. I have never wanted to perform and even in ballet class I can learn far more from watching such a dancer as Margot Fonteyn than by doing class myself," he told me.

The second company was then just forming and he stayed at the School when its first London season was given. When the Summer Tour began he got into the company "because the boy doing the big lifts in *Khadra* left".

It was Peggy van Praagh who made it possible for something of his early choreographic work to be first seen, when he rearranged the dances of the Angels in *Hansel and Gretel*.

He battled on in the company until the production of Andrée Howard's *Mardi Gras*, when he met Hugh Stevenson who had designed the décor and costumes and written the book.

"Hugh was helping with a charity ball, wanted a divertissement, knew of my longing to do something. I did *Adieu* to music of Scarlatti, with the sadly romantic story of a nymph whose lover is called away to war." The Director of the second company, Ursula Moreton, allowed Cranko to use dancers Anne Heaton and Kenneth Macmillan for it. Slight as this work may have been it was taken into the repertoire and led to the youthful choreographer showing Ninette de Valois his *Tritsch-Tratsch*, another small work but tinged more strongly with a sense of theatre, danced to Johann Strauss, and today a permanently popular trifle.

These were slight and tentative works, hardly suggestive of the sudden feeling of maturity which was to be found in his *Morceaux Enfantins*, to Debussy, first performed at the R.A.D. Production Club at a Sunday matinee.

John Cranko (*Photo: Alec Murray*)

"For the first time I was feeling more confident," he told me. "I had had the great experience of seeing all the de Valois and Ashton ballets. I knew so much more what I wanted to do and say for myself. My idea in *Children's Corner* was to convey aspects, recollections and impressions of childhood with dolls as symbols."

All this time his training as a dancer and member of the company was an accumulative experience. He moved up into the first company because, wisely, Ninette de Valois wanted him to work with and see at closer quarter how experienced choreographers produced their ballets.

Then *Children's Corner* was taken into the second company's repertoire, re-designed by Jan de Witt in brilliant yellows, the set Klee-like and controversial. In many ways Cranko likes this work better than his more recent *Sea Change*. "I think it does succeed in conveying the various characteristics of childhood which I set out to do and with a feeling of formal order," he says.

It was first produced at the Wells on April 6, 1948, the principal roles danced by Jane Shore, David Poole and Patricia Miller.

As well as his work with the Wells, he also did the dances and ensembles, at this time, for a revue produced by Hedley Briggs at the Playhouse, called *Calypso*. The critics were harsh. He also produced a ballet *The School for Nightingales*, to music of Couperin, for Alan Carter's St. James's Ballet Company.

The original cast, Poole, Fifield and Boulton in Tritsch-Tratsch (*Photo: Gordon Anthony*)

Above: The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in Sea Change, *showing the setting by John Piper. The photograph shows Hans Zullig as a Pastor, a role that was taken out after his departure for Germany. Sheilah O'Reilly as a young wife, is seen on the ground, demented with grief at the loss of her husband* (*Photo: O'Callaghan*)

Below: Patricia Miller as Mademoiselle Piquant in Children's Corner. *Kenneth Macmillan as her Great Admirer is seen in the background* (*Photo: Ian Gibson-Smith*)

For his first commissioned work by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet he produced *Sea Change*, to Sibelius *En Saga*, which was the fifteenth piece of music to be submitted before finally being accepted and John Piper did the set and costumes for him. It was first produced in Dublin last year, when the company was on tour before being performed at Sadler's Wells.

The protagonists of *Sea Change* went down to a different sea to the sailors of *Tritsch Tratsch*. This was all of tragedy, anguish, pain, the mood all of gloom and brooding. His sense of theatre, his knowledge of what is right and wrong upon a stage were apparent. This is a sincere work, simple in its conception and devoid of any tricks to gain easy effect. But its theme, its stark drama, could, one felt, have been realised more fully by the spoken word than by movement, by dancers.

The choreographer's art is indeed a difficult one and he needs many pigments, as Cranko himself knows, with which to create. How much easier it is for a young painter, for instance, to establish his style, to find himself, whereas the choreographer is lucky to have the chance of two productions a year and usually with the box office bogey looking over his shoulder. "My one prayer now," he tells me, "is to be allowed to keep working."

For two dancers only (Patricia Miller and David Poole), his last divertissement is *Beauty and the Beast*, to Ravel's *Mother Goose* suite, and, small as this work may be, he feels it an advancement on *Sea Change* because he was able to follow the one directly after the other. Confined to the strict economy of only two dancers, he was yet able to convey the essence of the whole magic tale.

He speaks of his work with assurance, sincerity and humility. "A new work somehow comes into the mind; sometimes the idea comes from music or else is drawn from an idea itself, or a character or some sort of formula that you've dreamed up. *Beauty and the Beast* was suggested to me as a theme by Mrs. John Piper. I had always wanted to use the Ravel music and when I heard it again I immediately knew that it could be used."

"When work begins with the dancers themselves, I always try not to let them become lifeless, like puppets which just fill a space, which is the most difficult thing for the choreographer to avoid at all times. Every movement has an implication which may be emotive or purely formal and each subtle implication must take its rightful place in the full synthesis. I always try to show the dancers the meaning of what they are doing and at the same time try to develop qualities latent in the performers themselves, yet always carrying in my mind the over-all, ultimate picture of the whole ballet."

Petipa, Fokine, de Valois and Ashton have been his strongest influences.

Cranko is now working on a new ballet to be called *Pineapple Poll or the Bumboat Woman's Story*, the plot taken from one of the Bab Ballads, music, of course, by Sullivan. It will follow the operetta pattern by way of being a rollicking tribute to the traditions of W. S. Gilbert. He is also planning a second new work, a formal arrangement with a slight emotive theme based on the life and death of Harlequin.

Young as he is, John Cranko already has revealed that he has the talent, is steadily gaining the knowledge and now has the opportunity, in his new appointment, of becoming one of the great English choreographers.

Tatlock Miller

Films

Baxter as "It" Girl

AS film musicals go, **You're My Everything** will probably go unnoticed. Apart from the sensitive, credible acting of Anne Baxter, who at one point in the film does a hilarious job of impersonating a "hotcha girl" doing the Charleston, there is little more to recommend it.

Roughly it goes like this . . . Hannah Adams, Boston blue-blood, falls for musi-comedy actor Timothy O'Connor. Contrasting backgrounds prevent happy union which is ultimately consummated by cupid-like manoeuvrings of sentimental Aunt Jane (Anne Revere), herself a relic of spinsterhood because of a similar situation.

Happily wed, Hannah casts her lot with Tim's and becomes a chorus girl in his show. Tim seen by a Hollywood scout is invited to do a screen test. Hannah, asked to substitute for actress scheduled to appear in said test with Tim, wow's movie executives and gets movie contract instead of Tim.

While Tim gloomily returns to night club work Hannah scores as "It" and "Hotcha" girl in films. In a great wave talkies arrive, Tim hits the jack pot in films as musi-comedy star and Hannah has a baby.

When the child is about five the tide recedes slightly over the O'Connors with a snag in film musicals and Tim's determination to carve a Shirley Temple career for baby Jane, in films. Hannah protests, fearful that her prodigy child will be just another film star, struts out of Tim's life clutching baby Jane under one arm and her sables under the other.

With Aunt Jane to the rescue, the curtain falls on the blissfully reunited trio at the première of Jane's picture in Boston.

There is not a great deal of distinguished dancing in this film. The lion's share naturally falling into the hands of Dan Dailey who does a workmanlike if somewhat pedestrian job of it all. By the time you've skimmed off the thick layers of "personality plus" (of which there is an unlimited supply) there remains little to digest. Apart from the Chatanooga Choo-Choo number which Dailey shares with Nyas and Warren Berry, pint-sized negro tap-dancers, who look like the reincarnation of the Nicholas Brothers only not as good, the crisp routine he does with Shari Robinson to "Would You Like To Take A Walk", there is little or no dancing left worth contemplating. Nor is there to be found in Mr. Dailey's dancing the nimble-footed quality of a Fred Astaire or the ingenuous wit of a Ray Bolger. Dailey has previously co-starred with Betty Grable in musicals *Mother Wore Tights* and *When My Baby Smiles At Me*.

Making her screen debut in this film, Shari Robinson, a ten-year-old prodigy, runs the gamut of accomplishment from neat tap-dancing and singing routines to wearing curls, coyly. She reiterates Shirley Temple in "The Good Ship Lollipop" and "Staircase Dance" numbers, to little avail. Throughout the film I could not repress the presentiment that ultimately P. T. Barnum would appear and expose her as a member of his troupe.

A junior Oscar should be awarded the Art and Decoration departments at 20th Century-Fox for the genuine and successful attempt at recreating the "Flapper" era in the first part of the film.

D.R.

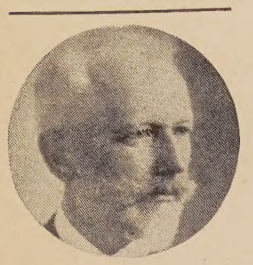
Anne Baxter as a sizzling "hotcha" girl of the 'twenties

(Photos : 20th Century-Fox)

Dan Dailey with Nyas and Warren Berry, who frantically try to catch their train in the hectic Chatanooga Choo-Choo *number*

Music

Tchaikovsky: music that dances



by **EVAN SENIOR**

The music of Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky is sweeping today's concert audiences off their feet—and off their heads sometimes. It is the latest "craze" and newcomers to orchestral concerts feel that they have made a great discovery. But they are a little late. Ballet audiences discovered Tchaikovsky long ago and for the last eighty years or so his music has been one of the great glories of the classical ballet.

If you look through a list of those generally recognised as the great classical composers of the last century, you will find among them only one who actually wrote ballet music. Of course, you will find ballets danced to the music, written for other purposes, of many great composers; but except for a few instances, such as small ballet scenes in operas, Tchaikovsky was the only one apart from Leo Delibes, who is hardly in the same class, who actually set out to write music for ballet.

In fact, his three great ballet scores—for I don't want to talk at the moment about the many ballets performed to adaptations of his other music—are well-nigh immortal. If there are still dancers to dance them they are quite likely to be danced when his symphonies have been forgotten. *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty* today attract crowds probably greater than either ballet had when it was first produced; and if the third, *Casse-Noisette*, has not had quite the same success or long life, it is more the fault of the subject and scenario than of the music.

The faults which musical purists are so fond of ascribing to Tchaikovsky as a composer of symphonies are just the qualities which make him a good composer of ballet music. In his symphonies and concertos he could not take hold of a musical idea and stick to it. He was forever chopping and changing, getting too emotional, and having too much to say for himself and not letting the music say it for him.

As an example, take that wonderful melody with which he opens his B flat minor piano concerto—the tune that has been borrowed to make the modern song, *Concerto for Two*. He plays around with it for a while and then gets tired of it and throws it away completely, to start his concerto properly, later on, with something quite different and not half as good.

But a lot of little ideas, while not being very good for a symphony or a concerto, are just what is wanted for a long ballet score. And it is in ballet that Tchaikovsky's gifts for melody, for brilliant orchestration, and for painting a character in music, are in their element.

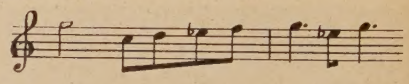
The main reason was that he was a ballet enthusiast. Most cultured Russians of his day were. Ballet was part of their existence; they knew it as connoisseurs and not merely as amused amateurs. And when the choreographer outlined his action to Tchaikovsky, the composer knew every *pas* and *enchaînement* by its correct name. Even before he wrote *Swan Lake*, his first ballet, he had travelled and had seen ballet in France as well as at home, and had in addition the imagination and sensitiveness of the educated Russian of his day.

Swan Lake was a romantic fairy story ideally suited to his particular temperament, to his intense, unhappy and often morbid imagination. And into this ballet score he poured all his melodic gift and his imagination, his ability to make the music describe the characters and the action.

Probably you have noticed, in the first act alone, how he describes the characters as they enter, so clearly that even a blind man could understand what sort of person is coming on to the stage. The music at once gives us the understanding we need of Siegfried—essentially noble, an idealist, somewhat light-hearted. It gives us Wolfgang, the fussy old rake, and the dignity and authority of the Princess-Mother.

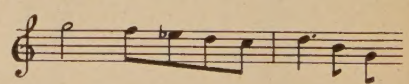
But the *Swan Lake* music goes even deeper than character. As well as describing, it comments. It prepares the way for what is to happen, deliberately plays with our emotions, and makes us actually feel sad or happy, according to the demands of the story.

Even before the curtain rises we hear, during the prelude, some different forms of the little tune that Tchaikovsky chose to convey to us the idea of swans—the "Swan Theme" that runs right through the whole work, in different forms:



As soon as you hear that theme, it conveys to you the idea of birds in flight—of the soft beating of wings, of an upward soaring. The sound alone does that. On paper, it does the same thing. After that first note, come the four quick notes running upwards, and then three more, with the up-down-up movement as of flying wings.

That is the "theme" of the swans, skimming through the air. As well as the hint of it in the prelude, you hear it again more clearly after the revelry of the first act, when the flight of swans swoops overhead as Siegfried stands alone on the stage. Although there is nothing but the music and Siegfried's gaze to suggest them, you can almost see them, in the dusk, and hear the beat of their wings.

But the tune first heard in the prelude appears later on, in the second act, in a slightly different way. This time it heralds the appearance of Odette in her human form, still a Swan Princess, but now a woman, able to feel more intensely and to understand her dreadful fate. It is the same melody, slightly altered. Now, instead of soaring upwards, the tune droops mournfully. You can hear this, and when written you can see it, too:

Starting on the same note, its four following notes fall softly and slowly, and then the melody

(*continued on page eighteen*)

Fonteyn and Helpmann in the third act of Swan Lake (*Photo: Angus McBean*)

Curtain Up!

Meteoric French dancer, JANE LAOUST (*photo above*), has signed with the newly formed Imperial Ballet. Spotted by Bertram Montague in Roland Petit's *Carmen*, she was engaged for the pantomime *Dick Whittington*, currently at the Princes Theatre.

Miss Laoust, who doesn't speak a word of English, sports an American passport, claims French nationality and expresses an eager desire to work in England, the land of balletomanes and dance connoisseurs.

She was born in Philadelphia on May 27, 1927. A year and a half later her brief American citizenship was uprooted by parents unable to orient themselves to life in the hectic new world, returning to France somewhat disillusioned.

Her grandfather, André Laoust, an Edwardian sculptor of some repute, has works in the Musée Roubaix in the North of France.

She is devoted to Mme. Rosen, her ballet instructor for nine years, who holds court at Studio Wacker in Paris along with other prominent *professeurs de la danse*. At 16 she was considered the youngest ballerina in France for she held that position at the Opera de Lille (North of France) and later at the Opera in Marseille. Joined the Roland Petit company in November, 1948, and danced the second female role in *Carmen* which Petit created especially for her.

If present commitments in London do not interfere she will return to the Opera in Marseille in March to choreograph a ballet on the life of Beethoven, to his 5th Symphony.

★

Not even the warning that "persons in scanty clothing or men dressed as women would be refused admittance", had the slightest effect on the fantastic rout of nymphs, fauns and other flora that make the VIC WELLS BALL (held at the Lyceum on February 2) one of the strangest spectacles of the year. The unfortunate members of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet had to give excerpts from *Casse Noisette* on a floor as slippery as an Ice Rink and at a rake, while the noises of revelry from the bar completely drowned the music. Considering all things, they gave a very good performance but when will somebody realise that an occasion of this sort needs tumblers, acrobats and Can-Can girls? It was most painful to hear Tchaikovsky's loveliest *pas de deux* music submerged in such a cacophony. Members of the Old Vic and Sadler's Wells "senior" company were conspicuous by their absence.

★

ROBERT HELPMANN is doing the choreography for and producing a new musical (*Oklahoma* style). The background is the famous Gold Rush in South Africa. The music and book are by a young South African, John Torre. The show was originally to have been designed by John Piper but as he has previous commitments in New York, it will now be done by Audrey Cruddas.

★

Madame LEGAT has severed her connection with the British School of Russian Ballet (now called the School of Russian Ballet) but the famous system of Legat is being carried on by John Gregory and his wife, Barbara Vernon.

On January 25 there was a display of dancing and singing, in the Chelsea studio, at which Moira Shearer was a guest. During the evening Maestro Launitz gave a talk, recalling some incidents in the life of Legat. He said that the great teacher used to spend all his spare time drawing caricatures of his friends on the back of cheese boxes. With the result that he bought more cheese than he could ever eat.

★

Wild rumours concerning the grave illness of ballerina ROSELLA HIGHTOWER, have been squashed by recent news from Paris of her departure for Germany with the de Cuevas company.

If the "idle-gossipers" who spread these ugly rumours in the first place realised the panic and distress they have caused amongst friends and admirers of the American ballerina, they might pause to reflect a moment before spreading subsequent ones.

★

Two members of the late Metropolitan Ballet went to Paris to look for jobs. Hearing that there was a good opening in a new cabaret, both boys immediately applied. Having been well looked over by the management they were asked if they could do a *grand écarté*. Although they had not the faintest idea what it meant they promptly said they had been doing them for years. It was not until later that they learnt the truth—they were supposed to do the "splits" dressed as Can-Can girls! They are still looking for jobs.

★

Delegates to the Colombo Conference—a London newspaper reports—were delightfully entertained but, "There was another aspect of the party (at the final reception in the House of Representatives) which to the British visitors seemed slightly unparliamentary. A troupe of thinly clad dancing girls were performing in the Members' lobby" (*D.T.*, Jan. 18).

This stimulates visions of developments much nearer home. I should be highly interested to have my occasional visits to our dreary Members' Lobby, enlivened by, say, a performance of dancing by the Cripps' Calorie Quartette; or, perhaps some folk-dance such as *Gathering Groundnuts* by the Morrison Dancers.

★

MARIA de BARONCELLI of the de Cuevas Company temporarily abandoned the classics(?) for low-brow night club stuff. Reported as dancing at the popular Bal Tabarin in Paris, she has since rejoined the de Cuevas Company for their tour of Germany which began on January 29.

This column has yet to learn the name of the wealthy young Parisian whose persistent attentions have been depriving Maria of precious sleep.

★

Now that the fanfare of her recent marriage has simmered down considerably, CONNIE GARFIELD (Baker) after getting comfortably settled in her Kensington flat, is back on the boards dancing in *Brigadoon*. In the offing is an offer of the Bambi Lynn role, acting-dancing, in the forthcoming London production of *Carousel*.

★

BETTY NICHOLS, coloured ballet dancer and recent exile from New York living in Paris, appears to have abandoned dancing for straight acting. Not only has she acquired a role at the Théâtre de Poche but in addition a tall, blonde and handsome Frenchman from the Jean Louis Barrault Company. Betty, I am told, will settle down in Paris after the wedding this autumn.

★

KENNETH PETERSEN, formerly with Colonel de Basil's company and last seen at the Empress Hall in the Nijinsky Galas, has left London to join the Cullberg Balleten (run by Birgit Cullberg former Jooss dancer) in Stockholm. The company is unique for its intention to present a combination of modern dance and classical ballet.

★

Our Hollywood correspondent reports that EUGENE LORING who made such a terrific splash in 1941 as dancer-choreographer in the Christiansen-Loring ballet company called Dance Players, besides being dance director for M.G.M. and other Hollywood studios, has opened a ballet school there.

★

YOLANDA LACCA, formerly with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, entertained that company upon its recent visit to Los Angeles. Among the guests at her lovely Beverly Hills home was the company's ballerina Alexandra Danilova.

Miss Lacca has been invited, along with George Zoritch, to dance at the Scala, Milan, next season. In addition to managing her ballet school "Ballerina" located on the fashionable Sunset Strip in Hollywood, she has found time to do some legitimate acting in the movies. Readers may have seen her in "The Story of G.I. Joe" and "The Chase".

★

"Alicia," cried Pat,
"Do we look quite like that?
Such a couple of wrecks
As this photo by X."

"Of course not," she said,
As she patted his head.
"You've got the wrong box,
That's Nervo and Knox."

New Ballets

Beauty and the Beast

First given at the Sadler's Wells Theatre by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet on Tuesday, December 20, 1949; Music by Ravel (*Mother Goose Suite*); Choreography by John Cranko. Scenery and costumes by Margaret Kaye.

Beauty . . Patricia Miller
The Beast . David Poole

The Beast is discovered lying on the ground, sobbing at his ugliness. Beauty appears, having lost herself in the wood; unseen by her he follows. She discovers his garden and sleeps on the grass until the sun's rays wake her. While admiring the garden she picks one of the roses. The Beast immediately jumps out from behind a bush and demands that she return it, terrified she tries to run away but branches grow and stop her. He offers her the rose but she rejects him and throws it in his face. Sadly he tells her that she is free to leave the garden, and at once the branches vanish and clear her path. Turning to give him a last look before leaving she sees him sobbing on the ground. Touched by pity she returns and kisses him; instantly he turns into a Prince and they live happily ever after.

This ballet, probably quite unconsciously, is the epitome of immediate post-war French "escapist" art. Here, is the Gothic fairy tale—the "two-person" ballet (so beloved by French companies)—the grey, black and white setting, faintly reminiscent of a Lurçat tapestry. The music, though post-fourteen-eighteen war in actual fact is more typical of ballet music in the past five years.

Cranko is a musical choreographer and his pattern clear (when the lighting allows). He has built the work round the particular qualities of Patricia Miller, who looks lovely and dances as if she really felt the role. It is hard to imagine anyone else in it, although Fifield took over at short notice on one occasion, but she was never more than a good dancer in a ballet, whereas Miller is heroine of any fairy tale. The Beast needs no more than a competent male dancer and although Poole, Blair and Wright have given good performances, none of them really portrays the animal nature of this princely monster. The supported *turns* followed by a *lift*, which causes them both to look as if they are swimming out into the audience, suggest the "happy ever after" idea more adequately than mere words. **P.W.**

Photos : Denis de Marnay

First two at the EMPIRE

Yesteryear had its first performance at the Empire Theatre on Boxing Day, 1949. For the opening ballet in this new form of stage and film presentation, Frank Staff has choreographed an abstract work. It shows the three phases of ballet evolution in this century starting with the Genée period of music-hall ballet; it goes on to depict the Russian period in a *pas de trois*, finally the symphonic period of today. A work on such a broad scale was ideal for the vast spaces of the cinema, nor was it dominated by the high speed tap girls who preceded it. Staff, usually a rather subtle choreographer, had eliminated all niggling detail and the general effect was pretty and did not tax the brains of tired cinema-goers.

The second ballet, *Amphitryon* 50 came into the programmes on Monday, January 23. This ancient Phlyax comedy is probably the blue-print for every domestic farce ever since. But the story of Jupiter's descent to earth with the intention of seducing Alcmene, the faithful wife of Amphitryon; how he manages, by a ruse, to send Amphitryon off to the war while he enjoys a night with the unsuspecting Alcmene disguised as the husband, is too intimate and complicated for a large theatre.

The Bach music sounded thin compared with the rest of the programme. Members of the audience who had no programme were completely at sea; those who had, were not much wiser. It was all very disappointing as the first ballet lead to hope that we might get a series of interesting and popular works, but here Staff has created something entirely wrong for this kind of entertainment. I have been told that this is all part of an experiment to try all types of ballet. Very worthy. But a cinema giving four performances a day for three weeks is no place for experiments and can only do Ballet a lot of harm. Better far to have the butterfly, Dresden china, flower, and patriotic ballets of Wilhelm.

P.W.

Above: John Hall with Noreen Lee, Glen Gordon with Brenda Hamlyn, Igor Barczinski with Annette Chappell and David Gilbert with Jeanne Artois, together with some of the corps de ballet in the third part of Yesteryear.

Right: John Paget as Mercury, Igor Barczinski as Jupiter disguised as Amphitryon, Annette Chappell (in grey) as Alcmene, John Hall as Amphitryon. With Joan McClelland (extreme left), Noreen Lee (centre) and Brenda Hamlyn (extreme right) as friends of Alcmene, in Amphitryon 50.

(*Photos: Rimis*)

MODERN DANCE

The birth par

José Limon in Malinche

(Photo: Strate)

During the last twenty y classical ballet, unobtru "Well, what precisely i parts modern painting a complexities of our wor representation of man i the way we move, prov distorting, enlarging or brought into full play b By fuller use of the body Radiating from the pelv modern dancer is in hi turnout is not essential Left mainly to his own form that is individual a

DURING the closing days of the first half of the century, a dance event occurred in New York City that marked the beginning of a new era for Modern Dance in America. This historic event in mid-December was the establishment and début of the New York City Dance Theatre at the New York City Centre (also home of New York Ballet Company). This consolidation of most of the major figures in the modern dance field was under the direction and supervision of Isadora Bennett, long a dominant figure in this field, and Richard Pleasant, who helped organise Ballet Theatre in 1939.

The establishment of the New York City Dance Theatre has served to focus attention on modern dance, its aims and its chief exponents. What modern dance is about and what it tries to do is becoming a matter of greater interest to more people as time goes by. Physical movement is the basis of modern Dance and the dancer's body is his medium of expression. It is expressional in that there is no set vocabulary of movement. Its chief aim is to give outer expression to inner emotions and its purpose is to disclose nature rather than to imitate it. To convey this it often employs distortion rather than pure pictorial representation.

This, in essence, is what modern dance means today, and its roots are traceable to three founder-pioneers—Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. Each of these leaders made great contributions, some of the results of which are only now assuming their true proportions.

The Standard-bearers

ISADORA DUNCAN, by now, has become a legend. It was Isadora who returned dance to natural movement of the body. She also developed torso and arm movements that had not been explored by the ballet and it is this development of such middle bodily movement that gives added strength to today's modern dance. Isadora, moreover, took the largest possible view of dance and declared that it was an art in which all could participate.

Much more immediately discernible, however, are the separate and joint contributions made by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn.

In everything that ST. DENIS has done, her chief concern has been with the inner, spiritual life of man. It is this so-called "inner life" which motivates the works of today's leading dancer-choreographers. St. Denis also removed dance from the stilted atmosphere of the concert hall and returned it to the theatre. Her early "music-visualisations", where dancers moved in relation to various parts of the orchestra, took their form and inspiration from music and, later, developed into works such as those co-composed by Doris Humphrey and St. Denis. They had such an architecturally perfect form that music became secondary and, in one instance, was dispensed with altogether.

TED SHAWN, on the other hand, in addition to pioneering the cause of male dance in America, making it both acceptable and popular, was the first dancer in the United States to deal with purely native themes. His introduction of American Indian and folk dance material into the realm of theatre dance was a major contribution that has enriched the whole field. Shawn, as founder-director of Jacob's Pillow, the summer university of dance, continues yearly to broaden the young dancer's background in the field of ballet, ethnic and modern dance.

Leaders in today's modern dance—DORIS HUMPHREY, MARTHA GRAHAM and CHARLES WEIDMAN — spent a good part of their formative years studying and dancing in the Denishawn School and Company.

The other outstanding figure, Hanya Holm, came to America in 1931 from Germany, where she had worked with Mary Wigman. Over the past two decades, Graham, Humphrey, Weidman and Holm, through their schools and companies, were largely responsible for the emergence of dancers such as José Limon, Pearl Primus and Valerie Bettis.

AMERICA

are over

feverish activity centred around the reconstruction of a floundering
ves were sprouting on a hybrid growth called Modern Dance.
nce?" you will ask in desperation. Modern Dance, like its counter-
usic, is an expression of our time. It is the dancers response to the
ovement. The modern dancer, for the most part, disregards pictorial
express man's inner self. Unconsciously, we express ourselves by
r the modern dancer who gives it the impact of artistic form by
he original gesture or movement. The spectator's imagination is
s that are suggestive rather than all-explanatory as in pantomime.
tionship between life-movement and dance-movement is established.
orts as well as liberates movement, the centre of locomotion for the
ough one occasionally recognises steps resembling ballet steps, a
are-foot is the rule rather than the exception.
e modern dancer formulates his own technique, developing it into a

Martha Graham in Jocasta
(*Photo: Strate*)

Today MARTHA GRAHAM stands out as the prototype of modern dance in America. Her phenomenal technique, coupled with a tremendous intensity and a magnificent stage presence, have brought her before an ever-widening audience. Within the past two decades she has created more than a hundred soli, ensemble and major dance-theatre works. In almost every instance each of these works has served to further illuminate the inner man by a kind of dance action that is telegraphic in its implications. Through distortion and exaggeration of movement, Graham takes her audiences on a journey into the labyrinth of the human heart. Her dances are actually examinations of human experience. Graham's virtuosity and versatility are almost limitless so that her range encompasses the satiric comedy of *Every Soul Is A Circus*, the lyric elegance of *Appalachian Spring* and Medea-like fury called for in *Cave of the Heart*.

DORIS HUMPHREY'S approach to choreography and dance movement is totally unlike Graham's. Her works in the years since her retirement from dancing have taken on a more monumental significance. Three of her recent works for José Limon—*Lament For Ignacio Sanchez Mejias*, *Story of Mankind* and *Day on Earth*—were acclaimed by the New York critics as the major event in the series of New York City Dance Theatre programmes.

Like other American dancers, Doris Humphrey is interested in man's relationship to his inner and outer world but in her choreography she emphasises the group rather than the individual, presenting a more rounded version of man's relationship to the world. She handles groups like a symphonic composer or conductor and her works have a spacious, architectural unity and coherence.

Doris Humphrey's dance methods are clear and forceful, her technique is concerned with the conscious control of the dancer's body. Chiefly emphasised are the designs created by the dancer's ever-changing positions, the rhythm or accent with which these positions are attacked and the varying shades of tension that are employed.

CHARLES WEIDMAN for twenty years has been the other half of the Humphrey - Weidman school and company. His wonderfully comic gifts and use of gesture and mime are unique in modern dance. He is equally at home in such humorous biographical portraits as *And Daddy was A Fireman* as in the more dramatic dance of the spirit of Abraham Lincoln in *A House Divided*. Weidman, like Ted Shawn, has spent much time developing and expanding the physical technique of the male dancer.

HANYA HOLM came to America in 1931 to found the New York Wigman School of Dance, played an important part in the shaping of American modern dance. In 1936 this school became known as the Hanya Holm School of Dance and its methods departured from the Wigman approach in order to accommodate the artistic stimulus that Miss Holm found in America. As a teacher, Hanya Holm is unequalled in America.

The first of these is JOSÉ LIMON, without a doubt the most important male dancer of this generation in America, who has already arrived at the full maturity of his dance and choreographic gifts. A member of the Humphrey-Weidman concert group from 1930 to 1940 and soloist in numerous Broadway musicals, Limon branched out on his own as a teacher, dancer and choreographer upon his release from the Army after the war. His first major triumph came in the works composed for him by Doris Humphrey. José Limon is a most masculine of dancers. His deep sense of music and painting were responsible for the success of his two most recent works, *La Malinche* and *The Moor's Pavanne*; the latter, a danced version of *Othello*, was one of the outstanding dance works composed in America during 1949.

Perhaps the most gifted products of the Holm School are José Limon, Pearl Primus and Valerie Bettis.

Arthur Todd

ICE *versus* BALLET *for arenas*

Maj Britt, who played (or skated) Cinderella at the Empress Hall, trained as a ballet dancer before taking up skating as a profession. She was the former Lady Champion of Sweden. Unfortunately she damaged her ankle at the dress rehearsal, so the leading role was taken by Eva Nyklova for several weeks

From time to time in the history of the dance, an argument arises which causes a lot of jolly friction and heated argument. Once Nijinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* caused a near riot; before the last war people got purple in the face about Symphonic ballets. 1949 was the year in which many presumably responsible people got very acrimonious about the suitability of ballet for large arena presentation.

On one of the coldest days of this year I found myself, inadequately clad (foolishly assuming that all entertainments indoors were centrally heated), sitting in a box literally on the ice at the Empress Hall, enthralled by the dancing in *Cinderella on Ice*. And whatever you may say, it was Dancing—an *arabesque*, *adagio* or waltz is still an *arabesque*, *adagio* or waltz whether performed on wood or ice.

Here I was, enjoying movement to music in exactly the same spot where I had merely found irritation from some of the world's greatest dancers, last year.

This number-one pantomime story is probably not ideal for display on a sheet of frozen water and the introduction of the spoken and sung word though the Tannoy makes it all the more false. But as a spectacle of extreme grace and breath-taking speed, it opens up a big horizon.

Let us consider the two. Ballet is an art of the theatre, framed by the proscenium arch. When abducted from its natural background and hurled, like an early Christian martyr, into the arena, only 25 per cent. of the audience get a natural view. The less-fortunate remainder spend an evening watching the heaving backs of the *corps de ballet*, or a *pas de deux* from the most unflattering angles.

Even, as has been suggested, some person should devise dance spectacles specially for all-side viewing, consisting of mass effects with the *corps de ballet* forming ever-dissolving patterns—the result would still be unsatisfactory. To get a number of people, propelled only by their two feet, on and off a large space is a slow and cumbersome business. Dancers cannot move fast enough for the beauty of their line to be good at all angles. The distance also makes movement appear much slower than it actually is.

Ice plus two bits of metal, alters all this—a hundred people can be in and out of an arena in a few seconds. The fact that the dancer (or skater) is so mobile means that any movement can be seen at a flattering angle by everyone at the same time.

But ice has its limitations; the variety of steps that can be achieved on a slippery surface is infinitely small. Elevation is almost ruled out. In double-work the male partner is without a firm foundation, so can be little support to the supported. The effect must, of necessity, be broad.

What wonders could be wrought by a master of production. Perhaps Ashton might be induced to forsake, temporarily, that Stately Pleasuredome Garden for Caves of Ice.

P.W.

New Books

Complete Book of Ballets, by Cyril W. Beaumont (Putnam and Co., 30*s*.).

The return of Mr. Beaumont's mighty work to the open market, should be an occasion of more rejoicing to everyone, with the slightest interest in the dance, than many other more lauded and less worthy ballet occasions which frequently deafen us with their blatant fanfare.

Here, are the stories of all the principal works from Dauberval (late eighteenth century) to Tudor (today) together with cast, history and observations on each. How anybody with pretensions of knowing, or writing, about dance and dancers can possibly do without it, is past my comprehension? Yet there are still a number of critics who pride themselves on having managed without it. What they have managed has never been quite clear, but it accounts for the number of mis-statements and inaccuracies that we read.

Pas de deux, the art of partnering, by Anton Dolin (Kamin Dance Publishers, New York).

The *Pas de deux* is the love passage of ballet. When properly danced it can be the most perfect expression of mutual attraction in all the arts—more satisfying than the massive operatic duet. In the 19th century romantic era the male dancer was completely eclipsed by the ballerina, and became a mere shadow, a *porteur*. Today he has regained his lost status and in most cases seems intent on getting his own back by pushing himself forward and neglecting his female partner altogether. Many is the time we have seen Swans, Sylphides, and Sugar-plums, carelessly thrown about, dropped, and, what is far worse, left to their own devices while the smirking male strides about looking at everyone other than the ballerina he is supposed to be presenting. Few male dancers look on partnering as an art, they only think of it as a boring thing that has to be gone through before their own variation.

No two people in this century have demonstrated more consistently the way a classical *adagio* should be danced than Markova and Dolin. Of all the thousands who have seen them, during their tours, few realise the part that Dolin plays in these performances. They will remember Markova soaring into the air and returning to earth without a sound, they will remember the ease and serenity with which she accomplishes all supported movements, but it is doubtful whether they give much thought as to how it was possible. That is the secret of perfect partnering. Dolin explains most of the secrets of the *Swan Lake*, *Giselle* and *Casse-Noisette adagios* in his new book, and it looks as though a further book will be devoted to the modern aspect of partnering. Written by one whose greatest contribution to ballet has been his perfect partnering, this book is quite invaluable. It should be a standard work in every school and on the shelf of every critic, and equally attractive to those outside the profession for its many excellent photographs by Fred Fehl. A pity that, at the moment, it is obtainable only in America.

Flower of Cities, a book of London (Max Parrishe, 18*s*. 6*d*.).

"Why," I can hear you muttering, "should Max Parrishe's new piece of Londoniana be reviewed in the pages of a dance magazine?" "Because, dear reader, ballet has become an inescapable part of London life and the publishers, fully realising it, have included a chapter on this increasingly popular phenomenon."

Miss Eveleigh Leith gives a very clear and concise account of the rise of British ballet—but we have read it all before and it seems that she has missed a great opportunity. As this book is essentially about the capital city it would have been more interesting had she described the effect of London on the ballet, or the ballet upon London. Our audiences are different in character and reaction to those in any other city. Our dancers too are influenced by the very factors that make London such a paradox. The effect of different theatres on ballet and the reasons for London becoming the ballet capital of the world, could have been dealt with.

The rest of the book is, in the main, entertaining—twenty-two writers having been asked to write on their favourite aspect of London life with almost as many artists expressing theirs in line. This miscellany is made worthwhile if only for John Betjman's masterly observation of railway stations. In fact the ambitious choreographer, when he tires of the realms of abstraction, might find here many ideas for ballets, reflecting the life of a great city.

P.W.

Story of Ballet Rambert
1. a profile of Madame

"A profile?" queried Madame Rambert, "like this?" And quickly her head was held high and to one side and in profile before me. "Well," she said, "my mother says I danced myself out into the world. And that was in Warsaw. I was born in Poland. I was always a performer, even then. As a child I liked an audience. I'd climb trees, do balancing feats on swings and mimic people."

DOES Marie Rambert need any introduction? I think not. Imagination baulks at the thought of anyone with even the slightest interest in either the dance or dancers not knowing something of the multiple energies of the founder of the Ballet Rambert, of the Rambert School, of the Mercury Theatre at Notting Hill Gate.

It all began when a little girl aged nine was taken by her parents to the Warsaw Opera to see *Swan Lake*, in three acts, with the beautiful ballerina Cerri. A year later she was taking dancing lessons from the teacher of the Warsaw Opera—Slowacki. In 1905, she saw and was completely carried away by Isadora Duncan whose dancing was a revelation to her, with its revolutionary technique, its discarding of toe-shoes, its Grecian draperies. After seeing a performance of Duncan's *Iphegenia in Tauris*, Marie Rambert determined to meet her, to see if she could learn from her. Breaking through the Duncan's protective entourage, pushing passed Gordon Craig, who tried to block her path, at last in a corridor of the theatre she was able quickly to take up the hand of the Great One and press it to her lips. The next day's newspapers were full of a young girl's hysterical outburst in the theatre. Isadora Duncan, however, told her to come and see her the next day; but she would not give the young dancer an audition or, in fact, help her to dance at all. "She told me to forget all about dancing, to go home and have children."

Her parents, wanting her to take up medicine, sent her off to Paris in 1906 to stay with an uncle and aunt both of whom were doctors. At parties, in the salons of her aunt's friends, the young girl would sometimes dance. In this way Raymond Duncan saw her. "I danced to a flute. He told me I had great talent and taught me a lot about Greek art. He advised me to give private dance recitals, to compose my own dances. My first dance? Yes, it was to Schubert's *Moment Musicale*. I had a pianist. At one such party, given by a friend of my aunt, there was much applause after my performance. Among those seated about the room I had especially noticed a beautiful blonde French woman, grand, very *decollete*, and, then, my very ideal of beauty. The next day my hostess, knowing I wanted to dance and not to become a doctor, told me of a plan. She would telephone one of her guests to see if they had liked my dancing. I was to listen to the conversation on an extension. It was the beautiful woman whom my hostess telephoned. "How did you like the little dancer?" she enquired. "Oh, very nice," she answered. "But what do you *really* think?" my hostess asked. "Well," came the reply, "if you really want to know, I think she's very ugly but she has chic."

Admired and well-known by many painters in Paris, Rambert was at last to be launched as a serious dancer. She was invited by George Desvallieres, president of the Salon d'Autom, to dance at the official opening that year. "At the last moment I got an appendix, so could not be launched." It was at this time that she began dancing in the house of Mme. Lauth-Sand, grand-daughter of George Sand, who was herself a magnificent exponent of the Spanish dance and who played a strong part in Marie Rambert's artistic development.

Hearing in Paris of the methods of Jacques Dalcroze, Rambert decided to visit his school and went to Geneva for a three-weeks summer school, in 1910. She stayed three years. At first she was divided in her love, teased there because of her classical ballet training and immediately impressed by Dalcroze's teaching. "He was an inspired teacher, a great educator and tremendous disciplinarian. We worked ten hours a day. He always insisted that my dancing was too exuberant. 'Calm down,' he would say to me."

Marie Rambert in Pomme d'Or, 1917

At the invitation of Prince Serge Volkonsky, Dalcroze, with six of his pupils including Rambert, visited Russia to present a series of lecture-demonstrations. They danced in the Conservatorium at St. Petersburg, the Mikhailovsky Theatre and in the Smolny Institute before the Dowager Empress who afterward presented each dancer with a jewel.

After dancing in the Moscow Art Theatre, she met Stanislavsky and saw his performance of Tchekov's *Uncle Vanya*. Dalcroze and his group, after touring Germany returned to his school which had moved to Dresden, and there Marie Rambert arranged a ballet for sixteen men, a war dance, to music by Dalcroze. It was an enormous success. She was a teacher in the Dalcroze School, when Diaghilev and Nijinsky came to Dresden, in 1912, seeking help with the production of *Sacre du Printemps* with its complicated music written in such new rhythms, harmonies and dissonances. It was she they chose to help them.

She joined them in Budapest and there gave lessons in eurythmics, lessons which were exceedingly unpopular with the dancers who could see not the faintest relationship between the exercises and their dances. She explained the phrasing of the Stravinsky's music to Nijinsky.

(*continued on page twenty-one*)

Rambert, as she is today, discussing Nijinsky's role in L'Apres Midi D'un Faune *with Babilée. She taught him the role in four rehearsals for The Nijinsky Galas at the Empress Hall last November* (*Photo: Lido*)

Competitions

In our January issue Caryl Brahms set a competition in which you were invited to write a criticism of any one of the following ballets: *Les Sylphides*, *La Sylphide*, *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Giselle* or *Selina*. Here are Caryl Brahms' comments on the entries:

I was pleased and surprised to receive so many entries to the competition in the January number, even though most of them arrived at what felt like the crack of dawn (an expression I would have disqualified you for writing) —the postman always rings indefinitely.

I was relieved, too, that some of the notices ruled themselves out of the count without any hardening of my arteries.

Any notice containing the expression "truly great" was automatically an Out with me—if a performance is "great", then "truly" makes no sense. The same goes for "facial expression".

Notices suffering from a rush of quotes to the sentences were equally discardable, also any notice describing plot or dancer as being "too well-known to need description". It is doubtful whether even Furore Fonteyn is well enough known to need no description among our Icelandic readers! This also goes for "performed as usual" and "worthy of mention".

And I have always considered underlinings for sense and not for typographical indication to be the final insult to the intelligence of my reader—and my reader does not buy *Dance and Dancers* to be insulted. Or does he? See "Curtain Up!"

Eventually the competition crystallised into a field of manageable proportions and three entrants lead the field.

I liked Janet Sinclair's style, commonsense, and informed background from which she wrote a notice of *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*. But she twisted Proust to her purpose and the value of the criticism was weakened by the false analogy of the protagonists with Marcel and Albertine.

I particularly enjoyed Miss J. Barraclough's comments on *Selina* and I have asked the Editor to quote this entry.

But my final decision was unhesitating and Miss G. M. Keast has won the prize, in spite of her assessment of the Adam score with which I do not agree.

I conclude my report with the happy news that for reasons of my own I am sending special prizes to Judy Buttery (aged 14); B. H. Easey who has a headmaster he hopes (and so do I) may be influenced by an award into allowing a special visit to Covent Garden; and Sub.-Lt. B. H. Goulding of H.M.S. *Dolphin*, which will no doubt impress his Admiral into granting Ballet-Leave.

C.B.

GISELLE

Imagined by the Writer
To Have Been Recently Presented By
Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet

In *Giselle* Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet achieves a failure more promising in its implications than any of its numerous successes. It was bound to be a failure because we come to *Giselle* remembering perfection, and because the full interpretation of this difficult, dated but perennially exciting work is enchanted territory into which the still maturing dancer must either rush with comic folly, or must fear to tread. Folly is not among the attributes of this most interesting young Company, and as was to be expected their production is in general over careful.

Fairy tales are tales of violence, in which the ordinary is transformed into the appalling, and ecstasy must be purchased by death. They are at the same time period pieces, illustrative of the epoch of the storyteller. Theophile Gautier's absurd but moving fable of prince and peasant, magic and madness, is helped by Benois' sets, hindered by Adams' score, and so misted over by the cloudy brilliance shed upon it by Spessiva, Karsavina, Pavlova and Nijinsky, that it is almost impossible for dancer and critic alike to see it clearly and to see it whole.

To say that the Wells have given us the period piece, a graceful album vignette, rather than the tragedy in its force, is still to say that theirs is a most creditable and interesting achievement.

When Kathleen Gorham has learnt to repress her characteristic hand mannerisms she will be a more, not less theatrically effective Queen of the Wilis, and when David Blair can take a less ingenuous pride in the way his leg muscles stand the test he will care more that he should recover the love of the maiden.

As Giselle, Elaine Fifield's approach sets the pace for the whole. She in particular is too careful; serene when she should be enraptured, sedate when she should be mad. But emotionally this role is beyond a young dancer's power: her dilemma is that she must choose in what way she shall fail. If Miss Fifield's is a muted rendering, it shows by that very fact her taste and judgment.

I have witnessed performances of this ballet by celebrated Companies which I would be glad to forget. That which I witnessed last night is far from being one of these. On the contrary it has convinced me that here are several dancers whom we are going to take very seriously indeed: with all its faults (I would almost say because of them) it was a charming tribute to perfection.—Miss G. M. Keast, 14, *Endsleigh Gardens*, *W.C.* 2.

SELINA

Selina, the principal new work at Sadler's Wells last year, has been successfully revived this season. The music by Rossini, arranged by Guy Warrack, choreography and costumes by Andrée Howard, scenery by Peter Williams.

Modern ballet, as we know it, owes everything to the Romantic Revival. The age which revived nothing gave to the Art of the Dance perfect costumes, the use of points, and a mood of unreality. . . .

Sensibly, Andrée Howard and Peter Williams have gone to the Romantic Revival for inspiration. There, they have unfortunately lost themselves. Is *Selina* a true evocation of the Romantic Revival? Or is it a merciless joke at the expense of the 1830's. . . .

The choreography is very good. It is uniformly interesting and, at the same time, within the grasp of a young company. The name part suits Miss Elaine Fifield, whose very immaturity was in keeping with the innocence of Selina. . . .

The décor is magnificent. Despite its elaboration, it never dwarfs or impedes the dancers. —Miss J. Barraclough, *Southolme A*, *West Byfleet*, *Surrey*.

What do you want at The Garden?

This month we offer two seats at the Opera House to the person who sends in the best four new works he or she would like to see during the coming season, giving sound reasons. These ballets need only be new to the Sadler's Wells repertoire, they can already exist in other companies in any part of the world; or they can be ballets that have never been seen anywhere (in which case a short plot must be given).

Each one of the four entries should have—1. Title; 2. Author of book, if any; 3. Choreographer; 4. Composer; 5. Designer; 6. Plot, only if an original work (not more than 100 words); 7. Reasons for choosing this ballet.

Facts that will be taken into consideration when judging the entries will be (*a*) Their suitability for the present company and for Covent Garden; (*b*) Their suitability for touring in the English provinces, Europe, and the U.S.

Your entries should reach this office no later than first post on Monday, March 20, marked *Competition* in the top left-hand corner of the envelope and addressed to—The Editor, Dance and Dancers, Mersey House, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4.

£5 0
PRIZE COMPETITION
in our
APRIL NUMBER
Be sure of your copy

TCHAIKOVSKY BALLET MUSIC

continued from page ten

Again and again throughout the ballet this dejected melody reappears, creating in our minds the unhappiness of the Swan Princess and her desperate plight.

The use of this theme, in these two forms, is only one instance of Tchaikovsky's great gift for creating atmosphere, for presenting the theatrical aspect of music in its application to romantic drama. Perhaps an even more dramatic use of the same melody comes right at the end of the ballet, when, the power of the magician broken, Odette and Siegfried sail away across the lake into another life and an eternity of happiness.

Then Tchaikovsky takes exactly the same tune as in example (*a*) at the beginning. But, instead of using it in what musicians call the minor key, with a background of sadness, he changes one note only (the fourth), putting it up by just one semitone, and in this brilliant major key the familiar melody is crashed out by the full orchestra with a blaze of brass instruments:

In this form, dramatic and exciting, that original tune, instead of conveying unhappiness, carries our minds triumphantly upward into the realm of final victory and eternal happiness.

That is the true function of the musician in ballet—to convey to us through sound what the rest of the ballet is giving us through sight, to stimulate our imaginations and emotions so that they are prepared to follow what the ballet is telling us.

I have dealt here with only one small aspect of Tchaikovsky's ballet music. But it is, I think, enough to show you his understanding of the theatre, and perhaps will serve to encourage you to listen for yourselves to what he has to say elsewhere in *Swan Lake* and in his other music for ballet.

E.S.

Dancers you should know . . .

Blessed with a threefold talent for dancing, painting and singing, Iain Robertson is probably the only Scottish folk dancing specialist with ballet training in his background. He is rapidly gaining prominence from distinguished performances of his folk dancing art at folk dance festivals on various parts of the continent. He was last seen at the Folk Dance Festival at the Albert Hall on Jan. 6 and 7.

Iain Robertson doing a figure from a Foursome Reel *usually danced at Balls to bag-pipe music*

TO those of you readers, be you dancer, balletomane or layman, who have asked or wanted to ask the question: "Why did you choose to become a dancer?" listen to Iain Robertson and learn the most likely and most logical reason: "I always danced, just as I always sang and could no more stand still then than now, at the sound of a reel or strathspey."*

A native of Edinburgh, Scottish and Gaelic melodies and folk songs were his childhood companions forming the base of his present repertoire. Later he added a collection of folk songs drawn from the Highlands and Lowlands.

Robertson has travelled widely but finds that he cannot be separated too long from "scent and sight of the Highlands and the Isles". Something of this love of homeland was apparent in his performance of the solo dance Sean Truibhs (old pants) at the Albert Hall on Saturday night, January 7.

A master in Merchiston Castle School, one of the oldest public schools in Scotland, Robertson is the Director of Art and Master of the Choristers, for along with his interest in Scottish folk dancing he is a serious painter and trained singer. He has a degree in Art from Edinburgh and frequently exhibits his work. As a student he took part in College operas, subsequently taking the Licentiateship at the Royal Academy of Music in London and pursued his course of voice study with Pierre Bernac in Paris. He is actively engaged in giving concerts in Scotland of Folk and Classical songs and of his favourite Oratorios.

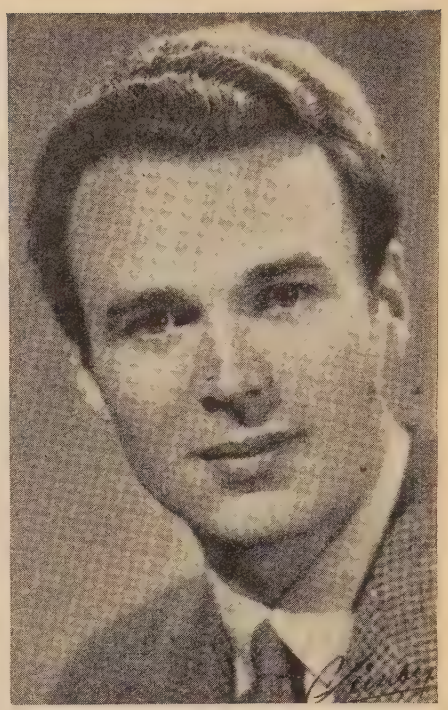
His development as a dancer began when he was quite young (he studied ballet) and crystallised when he became a member of the Scottish Country Dance Society. Appointed to the Edinburgh Exhibition Team, coached by Mrs. Florence Lesslie and Miss Allie Anderson who composed two new dances called "The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh" and "Prince Charles of Edinburgh" (the occasions being the wedding of the former and the birth of the latter) he had the honour of appearing in the team that danced for the King and Queen and later for the Duke and Duchess. The team is frequently called upon to perform at balls and receptions given for visiting diplomats and celebrities.

Periodic visits to Ireland, where he sang as well as danced were eventually rewarded by a Knighthood from the Principality of Thomond, the Dalcassian Order ENB.

Last year he was chosen to represent Scotland in the International Festival of Folk Dance in Venice. The team was tremendously popular in that city owing to the expert coaching of Miss Jean Milligan (vice-president of the Scottish Country Dance Society).

This year at the Albert Hall on January 6 and 7 the team again stood out. Especially distinguished was Robertson's solo dance

* Strathspey *is a Scottish dance rhythm. Others are the* reel *and* jig.



IAIN ROBERTSON

Sean Truibhs (old pants), the traditional dance for male dancers only. A virtuoso dance, it dates back to before the Jacobite Rebellion in 1715, was exiled to France with the Jameses, where it was influenced by ballet and returned in 1745 to be danced in Truibhs (pronounced trews) instead of the customary kilt. Connoiseurs of this particular dance irritated by the substitution of trousers for the kilt frequently discredited the costume by calling it Sean Truibhs or "old pants". With the appearance of the disarming laws, somewhat later, the kilt was forbidden and the Truibhs became the established mode of dress. As a form of protest a kicking step was added to the beginning of the dance symbolising the "kicking off" of the troublesome garment.

Highland Steps, Robertson claims, are solo steps for solo performance. Generally not recorded, they are handed down from father to son, school to pupil or from expert to disciple. Although the Military Schools of Dancing are turning out dancers with excellent footwork technique the general tendency has been to disregard the upper part of the dancers body, the result is rigid and ungainly; and since such awkwardness has no place in the tradition of Highland dancing, Robertson has emphasised the development of arms and diaphragm giving the finished product an easy, virile grace. He admits that his early ballet training has contributed much and greatly influenced his approach to Scottish folk dancing.

As dance ambassador from Scotland he will continue to appear whenever possible at exhibitions and demonstrations of the Scottish Country Dance Society.

D.R.

SPEAK UP

We very much regret that owing to lack of space, it has been impossible to include readers' letters in this issue. We shall continue this feature next month and we do hope that you will continue to write to us with your comments and grievances.

SHOP-WINDOW for Ideas

On February 14, Letty Littlewood re-launched AMBASSADOR BALLET at the tiny Chepstow Theatre in Bayswater.

By the time these words are read it will be possible to know whether this venture has met with the success it deserves. Companies with a State subsidy or guarantee are forced, by fear of the irate tax-payer, to use only established names—one glorious and extravagant failure spells doom. Commercial companies can only think in terms of playing to capacity, which inevitably means *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Coppelia*. How can the new comer, bubbling with ideas, break into the not-so-magical circle? Only through the tiny gap afforded by such concerns as Ambassador Ballet. Should the critics *en bloc* attempt to destroy it with their vitriolic pens, at least the attempt will have been worth it for a number of people will have had a chance to prove their worth. Which is some compensation for pages of red ink in the bank-book.

Ambassador Ballet was first seen in August 1949 when it had a two week's season at this same theatre. Included in the repertoire were *Drawn Blinds* by Eric Hyrst, *Images* by Letty Littlewood, and *The Drunken Village* by Ruth Sendler (originally for television in 1939, it contained the idea later used in the film *Whiskey Galore*).

The success of this first season prompted Letty Littlewood to have another season at a time when so many dancers were out of work. The present company has Maria Balinşka as Ballet Mistress and principal dancer; Judy Gold, Hermione Harvey, Eric Hyrst and Geoffrey Webb, all from the late Metropolitan Ballet; Jack Carter from Sadler's Wells and Continental Ballet; Kenneth Cope, an Australian who was with the Borovansky company and American Ballet Theatre; Gillian Reed and Corrine Duvernay from Miss Littlewood's own ballet school at Wimbledon.

Letty Littlewood has choreographed two works, *The Door* to Arnold Bax music, and *Images* to the Prelude, Corale and Fugue of Cézar Franck.

Eric Hyrst revived *Drawn Blinds* to Frank Bridge music. Created *Phantasus* to music by the young composer Heinz Herschmann, and *Dawns Mêns*, a ballet on a Cornish theme with music by Michael Hopson, who is a pupil of Lennox Berkeley.

Edward Lane, also from Metropolitan and now leading dancer in Ivor Novello's *King's Rhapsody*, made a jazz ballet, *Down Beat*, to Donald Phillips music. Jack Carter used Verdi music for his *Stagione*.

Our photographer, Lewis Gale, took these special photographs of the company during the early stages of rehearsal at the Nag's Head in Floral Street.

Top left—

Hermione Harvey (who used to be called Hermione Hudson) and Eric Hyrst (both from the Metropolitan Ballet) rehearse a pas de trois *with Maria Balinska (from International Ballet among other companies).*

Bottom left—

Edward Lane (in the air) rehearses Down Beat. *On the floor are Corrine Duvernay, Gillian Reed (from the Wimbledon Ballet School), Hermione Harvey. Standing are two more ex-Metropolitan dancers, Judy Gold and Geoffrey Webb.*

Next month we shall deal with each of the new works in full and include photographs.

Ballet Dates

THIS "At-a-glance" Guide shows where the English companies are now. For further news and details of each company see *Dance and Dancers* At Home pages.

SADLER'S WELLS at COVENT GARDEN

Mar.	6	*Les Patineurs*, *Giselle* (Fonteyn-Helpmann)
	7	*Les Sylphides*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Facade*, *Les Patineurs*
	8	*Les Sylphides*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Don Quixote*
	9	Gala Performance. *Symphonic Variations*, *Facade*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, Act III
	10	*Les Patineurs*, *Don Quixote*, *Facade*
	11 (M)	*Don Quixote*, *Giselle* (Shearer-Rassine)
	11 (E)	*Facade*, *Giselle* (Fonteyn-Helpmann)
	13	*Scènes de Ballet*, *Don Quixote*, *Mam'zelle Angot*
	14	*Les Sylphides*, *Scenes de Ballet*, *Mam'zelle Angot*
	15	*Les Patineurs*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Checkmate*
	16	*Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn-Somes)
	17	*Lac des Cygnes* (Grey-Field)
	18 (M)	*Les Patineurs*, *Giselle* (Shearer-Rassine)
	18 (E)	*Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn-Somes)
	20	*Les Patineurs*, *Giselle* (Shearer-Rassine)
	21	*Scènes de Ballet*, *Don Quixote*, *Mam'zelle Angot*
	22	*Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn-Somes)
	23	*Lac des Cygnes* (Grey-Field)
	24	*Checkmate*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Don Quixote*
	25 (M)	*Lac des Cygnes* (Grey-Field)
	25 (E)	*Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn-Somes)
	27	*Lac des Cygnes* (Act. II), *Scènes de Ballet*, *Mam'zelle Angot*
	28	*Coppelia* (Shearer - Turner - Helpmann)
	29	*Lac des Cygnes* (Act II), *Don Quixote*, *Facade*
	30	*Les Patineurs*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Don Quixote*
	31	*Les Patineurs*, *Checkmate*, *Mam'zelle Angot*

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET at SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

Mar.	4 (M)	*Les Rendezvous*, *Blue Bird*, *Jota Toledana*, *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, *Selina*
	11 (M)	*Les Sylphides*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *El Destino*, *Carnaval*
	18 (M)	*Lac des Cygnes*, Act II, *Sea Change*, *Blue Bird*, *Jota Toledana*, *Les Rendezvous*
	25 (M)	*Carnaval*, *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, *El Destino*, *Casse Noisette*, Act II
	28 (E)	*Casse Noisette*, Act II, *Summer Interlude* (1st perf.), *El Destino*, *Facade*
Apr.	1 (M)	*Les Sylphides*, *Summer Interlude*, *Lac des Cygnes pas de trois*, *Jota Toledana*, *Les Rendezvous*
	8 (M)	*La Fete Etrange*, *Haunted Ballroom*, *Blue Bird*, *Facade*

BALLET RAMBERT

Touring in Germany during February and March. Returning to England on March 26.

INTERNATIONAL BALLET

Touring a repertoire consisting of the full-length *Swan Lake*, *Coppelia*, *Giselle* and *Sleeping Princess*, together with *Endymion*, *Sea Legend*, *Visions* and *Les Sylphides*.

Feb. 20	The Empire, Cardiff
Mar. 6	The King's Theatre, Southsea
13	The Pavilion, Bournemouth
20	The Hippodrome, Bristol
27	The Odeon, Southend-on-Sea

CONTINENTAL BALLET

Feb. 27	Pilot Theatre, King's Lynn
Mar. 6	Arts Theatre, Cambridge

AMBASSADOR BALLET

Feb. 14 — A season of two or three weeks at the Chepstow Theatre Club, 18 Chepstow Villas.

IMPERIAL BALLET

Apr. 3 — Season of two or three weeks at The King's Theatre, Hammersmith. Followed by two weeks at the People's Palace, Mile End Road. After that an extensive tour of the English provinces.

MARKOVA-DOLIN TOUR

Mar. 20	Davis Theatre, Croydon
27	Granada Theatre, Woolwich
Apr. 10	New Theatre, Cardiff

RADEN MAS UTOMO

Utomo and his Indonesian dancers will give a week's season at Wyndhams Theatre starting on Feb. 27. Evenings at 7.30. Matinees, Thursday and Saturday, 2.30.

continued from page seventeen

BALLET RAMBERT

"I was young and immature and really detested classical ballet, which looked a torture to me," Marie Rambert continued. "But under Nijinsky's influence my thoughts changed. Most of the company hated my rehearsals, disliked Stravinsky's complicated rhythms and didn't believe in Nijinsky's choreography. Came the famous première of *Sacre du Printemps*, in the smartest theatre in Paris, Le Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in 1913. It was a truly epic ballet, a powerful representation of pre-historic Russia, of wonderfully crystallised style and great precision of movement. Perhaps Nijinsky persisted too much in making a movement correspond to every note of music but even that did not take away anything from his great conception. Throughout the ballet he used a position of the feet the very reversal of the classic, the feet completely turned in and carried it through every movement, giving a unique style to the whole composition. The Sacred Dance in Act Two, when the chosen Virgin is sacrificed to the sun, remains in my memory as an unequalled tragic dance, especially so when Nijinsky himself was showing it at rehearsals."

Marie Rambert was a convert to Russian Ballet, became a pupil of Cecchetti, was with the Diaghilev Company when it sailed for South America. Having worked so closely with Nijinsky on his *Sacre* and *Jeux*, Rambert found that she had become his confidante; he told her of his ideas, his dreams, his plans. And then he told her, on board the ship taking them to America, that he wanted to marry. "He told me of his love of Romola without suspecting that he was breaking my heart. I felt a great desire to throw myself overboard."

Returning to Paris she left the company to devote herself to the study of technique under a teacher from the Opera, giving occasional recitals, until, during the war, persuaded by a friend, Mme. Donnet, she came to London and studied at the studio of Astafieva. Asked by the Stage Society, in 1917, to make a ballet, she composed *The Golden Apples*, under Mme. Donnet's direction, to music of Corelli, in two scenes, the first designed in the style of Fra Angelico, the second a Botticellian garden. After its second successful performance, C. B. Cochran put it on at the Ambassadors Theatre, in a quadruple bill, with an English version of Anatole France's *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*, translated by Ashley Dukes—Marie Rambert married Ashley Dukes in March, the following year. "And now," she added, "I think you know the rest."

Tatlock Miller

The second part of the Story of Ballet Rambert appears in the April issue, and will be a history of the company and its personalities.

Next month

In DANCE AND DANCERS for April (published March 25)

Cover in full colour

Photo-Supplement of new ballets :

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DON QUIXOTE

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Dance and Dancers . . . . AT HOME

THE SADLER'S WELLS BALLET revived *The Sleeping Beauty* at Covent Garden on February 20 and it was well worth waiting for. Fonteyn showed more than ever that she is the greatest exponent of this mighty role and her *équilibre* is now remarkable. The variations for the fairies in the prologue were better danced than previously; a good thing as they are some of the loveliest dances in classical ballet though they have frequently been overshadowed by the wicked fairy Carabosse and her rodent entourage. Kenneth Macmillan was outstanding in the Florestan *pas de trois* in the last act, and it looks as though he will become one of the most important male dancers in the company. This is gratifying to those of us who prophesied this two years ago when he showed such promise in the *Giselle pas de deux* with the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. It is interesting to see now, how some dancers develop as they are moved up from the young company and how others become completely submerged. Brian Shaw and Avril Navarre danced the Bluebird *pas de deux* very well, though he again shows that he must develope a personality.

On January 27 Ray Powell took over the role of Carabosse in the *Sleeping Beauty*. His interpretation was far more evil and sinister than the others; this is right as she was never intended to be the comic character that frequently sends gales of laughter through the theatre.

On February 20 *Don Quixote* had its first performance with Helpmann in the title role, Fonteyn as Dulcinea and Grant as Sancho Panza. Too late to be reviewed in this issue, we intend to have several opinions of this new work in the April number together with a photo supplement. Cervantes' lunatic hero has been the subject of many ballets. The first appears to have been in Vienna in the seventeen fifties, the same theme was used by Milon at the Paris Opera under the title of *Les Noces de Gamache*. Later Taglioni's brother, Paul, produced it in Berlin in 1850. The famous Petipa version was first given in Moscow in 1879 in four acts; later in five acts at the Maryinsky Theatre at St. Petersburg in 1871, where it has remained in the repertoire to this day. England only knows the *pas de deux* which is frequently interpolated in a programme of other ballets, in order to display the technical brilliance of certain dancers. Recently Aurel Miloss gave the story a new twist when he choreographed it for Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées—Babilée appeared as a young man who imagined himself to be the errant knight. This new version is written by the composer Roberto Gerhart. Frank Staff toyed with it at one time for London Ballet, then Helpmann started working on it, now it is finally presented to the public by Ninette de Valois with Edward Burra designs.

Frederick Ashton should be back from America in March having mounted *Les Illuminations* for Kirstein's New York City Ballet with Cecil Beaton designs.

Markova and Dolin may appear at Covent Garden during the spring while Fonteyn is guest artist at La Scala, Milan.

In September the company return to America for a coast-to-coast tour, lasting about sixteen weeks. After three weeks at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, they will visit San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, New Orleans, Denver, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Cincinatti and Boston. They may also give a number of performances in Canada before returning to Covent Garden in January, 1951.

★

On January 31 *El Destino* had its first performance by the SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET, with choreography by Angelo Andes to the music of Manuel Lazareno and costumes by Hugh Stevenson.

It must have been the continuous success of the lively *Jota Toledana* (for Pirmin Trecu and Sheilah O'Reilly) that gave somebody the idea that a full length work of this kind would be good for the company. In a very short time, these young dancers learnt a *Sevillanas* and *Jota Aragonesa*, learnt also to play castanets. For Trecu, as principal dancer, there must have been little to learn for he is a Basque. Andes ingeniously strung it all together with the ghost of a story about a fortune-teller (Kathleen Gorham) who keeps a young Sevillian boy (Pirmin Trecu) away from a girl of his own province (Sheilah O'Reilly) and guides him towards one of Aragon (Maryon Lane). All very admirable and the company danced efficiently. But the dances of Spain are more than a display of traditional movements and the clatter of two bits of wood in unison, they are a reflection of the joy and melancholy of an ancient and noble race, a thing so inherent in Spaniards that their every movement expresses it. How can the most English of companies, even given much longer time, expect to acquire this and what real purpose is served by such a display? Possibly as a

Sheilah O'Reilly and Pirmin Trecu in Jota Toledana (*Photo: Ian Gibson-Smith*)

change from the classics and also as a sop to an audience guaranteed to applaud any dance from the Iberian peninsular. Both good enough reasons though the slightest heel-tap in London from Amaya, Rosario and Antonio, or Teresa and Luisillo, and the whole thing will look as exciting as *Selinger's Round* on a wet bank-holiday. Trecu, good dancer that he is, did not seem at home in his solo *Zapateado* (it looks awkward to have to put your castanets on the stage before your dance and then pick them up afterwards). The music of Lazareno is genuine enough and good at that; it should become very popular. Stevenson's pretty costumes appeared to be more carefully authentic than any we see in real Spanish shows.

On the same evening, Michael Somes appeared as a guest Siegfried in *Lac des Cygnes*, Act Two, partnering Elaine Fifield. Away from his own company, his partnering was none too sure and his mime on some occasions, quite meaningless. The young company dance with such exuberance that a few lessons on swan-behaviour would be a good idea—their movements should be softer and more lyrical.

David Blair replaced David Poole in Cranko's *Beauty and the Beast*; again the sterling qualities of this work were revealed. Patricia Miller's Beauty will become as personal a creation as are certain roles for Nathalie Philippart with Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées.

For the final ballet of the evening—Ashton's *Les Rendezvous*, William Chappell has designed yet another setting and more costumes. They were the least successful we have seen and the all-prevailing stripe (both in dresses and set)—very irritating. By removing the gates at the back, much of the point has been lost. Though nothing can completely spoil what is one of Ashton's most joyous works and which the company dance with such verve and obvious affection.

On Saturday, February 4, Peter Wright took over the role of Simplice, the poet, in *Selina*. This role originally created for Hans Zullig, was always played by David Poole after the former left for Germany. Wright's interpretation was different to any of the others, he was more like a young boy "trying his hand" at poetry rather than a poet who has had much contact with his muse. Never-the-less, it fitted well within the framework of the role and considering he had so little rehearsal his partnering was very good (the effect of Dolin working with the company is noticeable in many ways). The whole company has recaptured the spirit of the work and Fifield, in particular, found the happy medium between straight and burlesque.

★

BALLET RAMBERT, under the auspices of the British Council and at the request of the German section of the Foreign Office, left for a six weeks' tour of Germany on February 13. They opened at Goettingen on February 16 and will play thirteen other towns before they return to England at the end of March. The company of twenty three was headed by Paula Hinton, Margaret Hill, Walter Gore, David Paltenghi and Cecil Bates. The two conductors were Geoffrey Corbett and Brian Dunn. Leonard Dommett, the young Australian violinist will play the Chausson music when *Jardin aux Lilas* is given; the Mahler music for *Dark Elegies* will be sung by a German singer.

★

INTERNATIONAL BALLET returned from their nine performances in Zurich, flushed with the success not only of the ballet but also on account of the fact that they were able to sell £2,000 worth of their electrical equipment in Switzerland. They played to 30,000 at matinees and 90,000 at evening performances and proved that a large company can tour abroad and make a large profit without outside backing or subsidy. As a result of this, they are planning tours of other European countries.

★

Letty Littlewood's AMBASSADOR BALLET opened at the Chepstow Theatre on February 14. This small company is designed to show young dancers and the work of young choreographers. The dancers include Mary Balinska, Judy Gold, Hermione Hervey, Gillian Reed, Patricia Norman and Corinne Duvernay, Eric Hyrst, Jack Carter, Geoffrey Webb, Kenneth Cope and Ross Webster. The new creations include—*Phantasie* (choreography, Eric Hyrst; Composer, Heinz Herschmann; Designer, Geoffrey Lance). *Down Beat* (Edward Lane, Donald Phillips with costumes designed by Edward Lane). *The Door* (Letty Littlewood, Arnold Bax, John Hertzell). *Images* (Letty Littlewood, Cesar Franck, Geoffrey Lance). A new work by Jack Carter to Verdi music. A revival of Hyrst's *Drawn Blinds* to Frank Bridge music. And various classical *pas de deux*.

★

Blanche Littler will present IMPERIAL BALLET at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, on April 3. This new company of forty dancers will have Rovi Pavinoff as principal dancer and artistic director. Other dancers include Jane Laoust, Mela Carter, Sonia Hana, Irena Kyieva and Dorothy Stevenson. The orchestra is under the direction of Lyle Paget. The repertoire includes *Les Sylphides*, *Swan Lake*, Act Two, *Giselle*, three acts of *Coppelia*, and three of Pavinoff's works—*Salon de Danse*, *Le Siecle* and *Mazurka*.

★

On Saturday, January 28, the Eastern World presented RADEN MAS UTOMO and his company in a recital of Indonesian dances at King George's Hall, Bloomsbury. It was unfortunate that these dances of Bali, Java, and Sumatra, intended to be seen in scent-laden tropical moonlight had to be given during one of the coldest spells for many years. Not even the low temperature could dispel the obvious sincerity of these artists. Again, it was difficult to judge the standard of performance, as little Indonesian dancing has been seen here. It was interesting to see Utomo dance some of the male solos created by Mario, the most celebrated dance teacher and creator in Bali. Many of these dances were performed in a sitting position so that the dancer may concentrate on the movements of the head, arms, fingers, and upper part of the body. Another dance, the *Tari Piring* in which the dancers move gracefully in a weaving movement with plates in each hand containing lighted candles, would have had considerably more effect in the open air. There were several examples of the *Baris*, the fighting dance of Bali; the movements based on the attitudes of fighting-cocks (one of the most usual pastimes in Bali). It was said that the styles were too mixed in the whole performance; be this as it may, to a westerner the performance was one of interest rather than excitement as the dances are so stylised as to mean little to those not in the know. The general effect was of purity of music and movement.

★

THE BRITISH COUNCIL are touring an exhibition of designs, models, photographs and books on the ballet, which opens in Madrid on April 16. Later the exhibition will go to Barcelona and Bilbao and on to Portugal. It is probable that in the near future it will tour other European countries including Germany.

Michael Somes whose Summer Interlude *has its première at Sadler's Wells on March 28. This is his first choreographic work. The action takes place beside the sea. The music is Respigi's arrangement of 16th century airs*
(Photo: Hans Wild)

Dance and Dancers . . . . ABROAD

FRANCE

The strike of musicians that lasted through part of December and January stopped performances at the PARIS OPERA (as well as the Opera Comique). The reason being that the musicians said they had less pay than in the commercial theatres. Their salaries have now been augmented.

Nina Vyroubova was wrongly reported in our first issue as having danced *Giselle*. In actual fact she did not appear in this role until January 1 at Monte Carlo, when she was partnered by Lifar. Up to now Vyroubova has danced in *Mirage*, *Suite en Blanc*, *Lac des Cygnes* and *Divertissement*. It is still uncertain whether *La Sylphide* will be mounted for her.

Lifar and Cocteau are working on *Phedre*, in which Tamara Toumanova will have a leading role. She joins the company very soon, and it is likely that Eglevsky will appear at the Opera in the spring.

★

On January 25 Lifar's *Septuor* had its first performance at the Paris Opera.

It is a humorous and philosophical work. The humour is good but the philosophy weak and obscure. The scenario by Francis Blanche is about seven men who are successively hung on gibbet—a murderer, a wizard, a lunatic, a poet, a rope-maker, a hunchback and an apostle. All condemned by Man for the same reason—they love the world too much.

Lifar's choreography is the ballet's strongest point. It is clean, vivid, strong and expressive. Recognisable are the Lifaresque stage effects in usual bad taste. It is nevertheless extraordinary to have created as good a ballet from so un-theatrical a theme.

The dance of the lunatic (who wants to sell the world for five francs and is killed for it) is treated humorously and imaginatively. All the characters are cleverly drawn.

The music by Jean Lutèce is a faithful interpretation of the story. It is a parody of popular music (concertina), of religious music (organ), of jazz (saxophone) and the national anthem.

Danced by members of the corps-de-ballet, Jean Lemoine as the lunatic is outstanding for his brilliant technique. The décor and costumes were designed by Yves Bonnat.

★

On February 1, Nina Vyroubova danced the title role in *Giselle* for the first time at the Paris Opera, although she had danced it when the company was in Monte Carlo in January. This performance will probably be another milestone in the history of dancers who have attempted this coveted role. Mr. Tony Meyer, the French cultural attaché, was there on the first night and this is what he said:

"All the critics were unanimous in their praise of Vyroubova. Few dancers have attempted it so late in life (not that 28 is late in the life of an ordinary person, but it is for a dancer). She had obviously given the role a great deal of thought and worked out for herself several points to make this young peasant girl who thinks that Albrecht is a man of her own class, more convincing and in "the round." Her entry, the scene with the flower, and the moment when she sits on the seat with her lover, all had a new meaning. She radiated a happiness that could be felt all over the theatre. Her first act variation was magnificent and there was a great deal of applause. On the entry of the Duke and his daughter, Vyroubova's curtsey mistakenly to one of the ladies-in-waiting, was very moving. In the mad scene she becomes heavy and leaden, staring in front of her with blank un-seeing eyes, moving round the stage on flat foot as though she was part of the very earth itself.

Her second act was less good, partly on account of the fact that the interval was very short and she never had time to alter her mood. Also she had had little rehearsal. The frightful scenery which clutters up the stage with a monstrous white tomb, did not help matters either. This does not mean that she was not very good indeed, but she was not so superlative as in Act One.

Lifar was, as usual, overdramatic but he partnered and danced well.

Proof of the affection with which Vyroubova is held in the company, comes from the fact that on the first night eight of the male dancers sent her a large bouquet.

★

Massine danced the Hussar in his new revival of *Le Beau Danube* at the OPERA COMIQUE on January 20. The rest of the cast was as follows: The Street Dancer, Geneviève Kergrist; The Young Girl, Lucienne Berggren; The Dandy, Lucien Mars; The Strong Man, Michel Gerel; The First Hand, Ninon Leberte. The choreography and costumes were the same as always. The ballet was in tune but the interpretation, on the whole, very weak. Most of the dancers seemed to lack technique and personality. Massine was his usual self though occasionally he appeared out of breath and his arm movements lacked breadth, however he has some unique moments. The work was very well received.

Now that a reconciliation has been brought about between Massine and Hirst (Director of the Opera and the Opera Comique) after the *Tricorne* scandal with the De Cuevas Company (see "Curtain Up" in our January issue) it seems likely that he will also revive *Boutique Fantasque* and *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur* for this company.

★

LES BALLETS DES CHAMPS-ELYSÉES had a very great success in Egypt where the two Babilée works—*L'Amour et son Amour* and *Till Eulenspiegel* were the favourites. After making a return visit to Italy they appeared at Cannes for a month, on February 18. Later they appear at Toulon, Marseilles and Lyon. Gerard Ohn has rejoined after his military service.

★

Roland Petit's BALLETS DE PARIS, still touring America, return to the Marigny Theatre (their original home) in May. The well-known existentialist novelist, Raymond Queneau, is working on a new ballet for the company. The young French musician, Jean-Michel Damas will soon be joining them.

★

The Marquis de Cuevas GRAND BALLET de MONTE CARLO are touring Germany, appearing at Munich, Hamburg and Berlin among other towns. Marjorie Tallchief danced Odette in *Lac des Cygnes* for the first time and was said to be very good. In March they return to Monte Carlo for the spring season.

★

The much-boosted *La Reine des Valses*, which opened to an invited audience on December 22 at Le Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, had only two performances. The general public were very cold. The production was terrible and the ballets of Lichine equally bad. The principal singer, Elfie Mayerhoff, was reported to have lost her voice so the show closed and she returned to Vienna. That was that.

★

Kalman's *Princess Czardas* had its first performance at Le Theatre de Paris on Jan. 27. This well-known operetta was entirely rewritten by Michel Durant and the settings and costumes were by Wakhevitch, the film designer who decorated *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*. Massine choreographed a number of ballets for four boys and eight girls with ex-Sadler's Wells Theatre dancer, Peter Darrel as *premier danseur*.

★

As a result of KATHERINE DUNHAM'S great success at the Palais de Chaillot in December, she has decided to open a school in Paris, similar to the one in New York. As Miss Dunham feels that the atmosphere of the French capital is more helpful to artists, she now intends to make this her principal school. As well as giving performances, starting schools, this remarkable person has also found time to give an exhibition of her own paintings which were shown at the Librairie des Nations together with designs of her husband John Pratt.

Alain Vigot

U. S. A.

The 1949 autumn season of the NEW YORK CITY BALLET at the City Centre was the most successful in its brief history. Inspired by Sadler's Wells, the direction achieved an almost professional looking company. Two of the four new works premièred were very popular and sold out at each performance (Balanchine's *Firebird* and *Bouree Fantasque*) and programmes were re-arranged to capitalise on their success.

William Dollar, one of our perpetually promising choreographers, suffered a disastrous set-back. His new ballet, *Ondine*, was withdrawn after one performance. (Dollar, a protegé of Balanchine, also created *Le Combat* for the Ballet de Paris). When an announcement was made that there would be no second performance of *Ondine* the audience burst into applause and cheers.

For me the season at the Centre was full of surprises. Francisco Moncion contributed a delightful performance as the Prince in *Firebird*, dancing with an expressiveness and understanding which one would not have thought him capable. Tallchief, however, seemed to have no grasp of the style and possessed little atmosphere. Her technique is more effortless than ever and Balanchine has borrowed from every source (vaudeville, night club, and circus) to exploit it. There is a delicate and lovely dance in this ballet for the princess and her six handmaidens and the prince, that is memorable for its shy charm. Pat McBride, a new find of Balanchine, is a sweet and appropriately pretty princess.

Tanaquil Le Clerq is dancing Maria Tallchief's role in *The Guests*. She has grown heavier and is dancing with a coarser style. Only in *Bouree Fantasque* did she recapture a little the qualities one remembers. She and Jerome Robbins danced the first *pas* together with relish and communicated their enjoyment and delight in dancing to the audience. Perhaps this kind of ballet burlesque is more the kind of thing Le Clerq will ultimately be

most at-home in. The other soloists are Janet Reed, Herbert Bliss, Maria Tallchief and Nicolas Magellanes.

Outstanding this year is Beatrice Tompkins who mimes her role in the *Mother Goose Suite* of Todd Bolender with sincerity and elegance. She establishes an atmosphere that supports this entire ballet for she is required to be on stage throughout. Todd Bolender's dancing of the difficult Phlegmatic Variation in the *Four Temperaments* was an achievement.

The Company is rehearsing (for their end of February season) two new ballets, one by Balanchine (based on *Don Quixote*) and the other by Jerome Robbins. There are reports that Balanchine will dance the leading role in his own ballet.

★

The NEW YORK CITY MODERN DANCE COMPANY'S season has also come and gone. (Although these ballet companies bear the name New York City Company, they are not connected.) The deficit for the season was so much smaller than expected that all sorts of glorious plans are being made for the spring. Both of the major critics greeted almost everything presented with hosannahs, drawing the line only at Charles Weidman's new *Song of Songs* and a revival of a suite of dances of his so-called *Atavisms*. Apart from Sophie Maslow's *Festival*, an ingenuous little trifle based on Yiddish folk songs and dances, my view is far from being as rosy as the press.

★

UDAY SHANKAR and his Hindu ballet were given a cordial welcome and although every one noted that Shankar has gained weight he is still master of his art. With the cult of youth here middle-aged plumpness is an almost unforgivable vice and the added maturity and artistry that only the years can bring often go for naught.

★

Because of the scarcity of money there is a trend in New York now to minimise the importance of the dancing in musicals. This started with *South Pacific*, which dispensed with both choreographer and formal dance numbers.

Of the new shows *Texas L'll Darling* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes—Texas* has "ye olde time" tap-dancing chorus and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* has dances by Agnes De Mille for which even her staunchest admirers have been unable to cheer. There were great out-of-town fireworks during *Gentlemen's* pre-Broadway tour which resulted in the withdrawal of the show's soloist, Muriel Bentley. She was replaced by Anita Alvarez who danced well as the mute girl in *Finian's Rainbow*.

★

Of the shows currently in rehearsal or on pre-Broadway tours—*It's Great to be Alive* will have dances by Helen Tamiris, who also did the autumn revue *Touch and Go*, and will star Valerie Bettis, whose picture appeared in the February D. & D. This combination is vividly remembered from *Inside U.S.A.* and from which Valerie Bettis emerged a star.

Jerome Robbins has been announced for a new show, his *Miss Liberty* is still running, the dances for which, are its most distinguished feature.

Happy as Larry a fantasy starring Burgess Meredith, has dances by Anna Sokolow. *Alive and Kicking* is a revue soon to open, with Jack Cole doing the choreography and dancing in his first Broadway theatre appearance since the Ziegfeld Follies in 1942. Cole has recently been in Hollywood as dance director for Rita Hayworth musicals. A new Theatre Guild production *Arms and the Girls* has dances devised by Michael Kidd.

★

ROLAND PETIT is reported to be staging the dances for a revue to be produced here by the Shuberts next year. His company, Ballet de Paris, closed on January 14 and started a national tour. Henry Danton has replaced Milorad Miskovitch in his roles in *Le Combat* and *Le Rendezvous*. Miskovitch, who became ill, has returned to Paris and both ballets have suffered by his absence.

Herbert Ross

DENMARK

At the end of February prima ballerina Margot Lander will quit the Royal Danish Ballet. This month's programme has been arranged so that she will dance, at least once, her best roles. She will be seen in *Giselle*; the Italian fisher-girl in the third act of *Naples*; a ballet by Bournonville; Odette in the second act of *Swan Lake*; and as Swanilda in *Coppelia*.

Nini Theilade, just arrived from Mexico, is mounting two new ballets for the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen. *Ballet Suite*, an abstract ballet to music of Niels Viggo Bentzon, the Danish Composer, will have Mona Vangsaa as "the woman", Borge Ralov as "the aggressor", Fredbjorn Bjoronsson as "the frayed", and Paul Gnatt and Stanley Williams as "the anonymous".

The other work is a symphonic ballet called *Concerto* to a Schumann Piano Concerto. In the cast are Kirsten Ralov, Margrethe Schanne, Toni Pihl, Paul Gnatt, Borge Ralov, Svend Erik Jensen, Frank Schaufuss and Fredbjorn Bjornsson.

Expected some time in May are visits from the International Ballet and Markova and Dolin.

Since the war the Royal Theatre has been closed during the tourist season (June to September). The reason being that the stage is so old it has to be repaired every year; this takes two months. During August, the ballet, opera and actors have to rehearse for the next season. Now, it seems, the repairs can be finished in six weeks. If this is possible there may be a ballet season of two weeks in July, a thing quite unique in the history of this two hundred year old theatre. The main reason for doing this is so that the English (who can now buy all the Danish crowns they want) will be able to see the ballet. If this is the case we shall publish the repertoire in our May issue.

Bent Schonberg

Teresa and Luisillo, the two Mexican dancers who were such a hit in London when Carmen Amaya's company were at Princes Theatre in 1948. They now have a company of their own which is rehearsing in Spain. Bertram Montague, who is partly responsible for the company, hopes to bring them to London in April (*Photo: Iris*)

Nora Kaye of Ballet Theatre in Jardin aux Lilas

Clubs

LONDON

The London Ballet Circle (*sec.: Mr. S. W. Hawkins*, 47 *Ashchurch Grove, London, W.*12).

A discussion provoking lecture entitled "Notes on the Future of Ballet" was delivered to the members of the London Ballet Circle on Dec. 18 by ballet critic A. V. Coton.

On Jan. 15, Leo Kersely of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet presented a lecture demonstration on a "Ballet Class in Action". Celia Sparger lectured on "Anatomy and Ballet" on Feb. 19.

The R.A.D. Production Club (*sec.: Dorothy Watkins*, 154 *Holland Park Avenue, W.*11).

Of special interest to club members should be the lecture by Ninette de Valois on the "Sadler's Wells Ballet in North America", to be given to the members of the R.A.D. Production Club on Feb. 26 at 3.15 p.m. (Telephone Park 7402 for further details or write to club's secretary).

This season's lecture programme is as follows: Feb. 17, "Brains Trust," Arnold Haskell, Chairman; team includes Richard Buckle, A. H. Franks, Antony Hopkins and Joan Lawson; March 17, Lecture demonstration by Peggy van Praagh; April 23, Miss Beryl Grey; May 26, Major Derrington of the International Ballet.

The Coryphee Ballet Club (*director: Miss Janet Bradley, City Literary Institute, Drury Lane, W.C.*1).

This Club is a production unit composed of the more advanced members of the ballet classes of the City Literary Institute. Annual performances are given of ballets choreographed by Miss Bradley and by the students at which Madame Karsavina and Miss Phyllis Bedells have been invited to judge the work.

Members of the Club have appeared in a film on the work of Evening Institutes in the series "This Modern Age" (No. 30).

The Phoenix Ballet and Dramatic Club (*sec.: Mrs. M. Paine*, 73 *South Hill Park, N.W.*3).

Only in existence since July 3, 1949, this club has almost one hundred members, and is affiliated with the Marylebone Literary Institute, British Drama League, Music and Arts in Hampstead and the Affiliation of Ballet Clubs.

Nightly classes are held in ballet, mime and tap-dancing. Performances are being planned for 1950.

WILLESDEN

Willesden Ballet Circle (*sec.: Christine Greenfield*, 20 *Dean Road, N.W.*2).

A comparative newcomer to the Ballet Club fold, Willesden Ballet Circle was organised in May, 1949. Besides frequent coach trips to the ballet the Circle has already had a number of prominent lecturers on Ballet. Future plans include a visit from Nadia Nerina and a "Ballet Quiz" open to members of neighbouring clubs.

BRISTOL

Bristol Ballet Club (*sec.: Mrs. S. Bain*, 1 *Greville Road, Bristol*, 3).

Activities of the Bristol Ballet Club boast a lecture given in December by Anton Dolin on "Ballet As I Knew It". This month the club members boarded a coach for a trip to Covent Garden to see *Cinderella*. At the Victoria Rooms on April 29 they present a programme of three new ballets.

Guest instructors this season have been Betty Davis and Ruth French; Lydia Kyasht will most likely give a class in February.

LEWISHAM

Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club (*sec.: Margaret S. Childs*, 47 *Allenswood Road, Eltham, S.E.*9)

An impressive series of lecture-demonstrations on Appreciation of Ballet was provided for the members of the Lewisham Ballet Theatre Club. On Dec. 13 Phyllis Bedells lectured on "Ballet in England in My Time"; Jan. 10, A. H. Franks on "Films in Relation to Ballet"; Celia Sparger, M.C.S.P., on "Ballet Technique for Health and Posture", on Jan. 24.

At the Co-operative Hall, Feb. 7, Valerie Prentis lectured on "Ballet and Costume" and on Feb. 21 at the Lewisham Town Hall, Leighton Lucas spoke on "The Musical Approach to Ballet". March 20 brings the R.A.D. Production Club to Lewisham Town Hall for an "Evening of Ballet". For complete details contact the club's secretary.

LIVERPOOL

Merseyside Ballet Circle (*sec.: Miss R. V. Mooney, West Vale, Neston, Liverpool*).

Enthusiastic reports from the Merseyside Ballet Circle show an increase in membership since Christmas. Spring plans will include visits from Lisa Ullman, Alfred Francis and Helen Bird; in February a lecture and programme of ballet music by Ronald Settle and John Warner. Towards the end of the season (May) A. H. Franks and Joan Lawson are scheduled to visit the circle. Plans for a Ballet Circle production were started in January.

OXFORD

The Oxford University Ballet Club (*sec.: John Percival, St. Catherines*).

The Oxford University Ballet Club announces the reappearance of its pre-war quarterly *Arabesque* this month. An article by A. V. Coton will be among the features included in the first issue.

Speakers for this term will be A. H. Franks, Scott Goddard, Edwin Kersley, John Regan and Peter Williams; the terminal debate with the Cambridge University Ballet Club is also scheduled.

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